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Argyll's salmon rivers are hit hardest by scourge of sea lice

A85 to close at Connel for five nights

MARK ENTWISTLE AND SANDY NEIL
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FISHERY experts say Argyll's wild salmon catch is three times lower than expected, following a damning scientific report linking the spread of sea lice from intensive salmon farms to a 'severe' reduction in wild salmon and sea trout populations in Scotland.

The report, compiled by the Norwegian Institute of Nature Studies, examined the latest research on the impact of sea lice from salmon farms. It concluded: 'The combined knowledge from scientific studies provides evidence of a general and pervasive negative effect of salmon lice on salmonid populations in intensively farmed areas of Ireland, Norway and Scotland.'

Andrew Graham-Stewart, the director of Salmon and Trout Conservation Scotland (S&TC Scotland) which commissioned the report, said: 'For many years, we have maintained that the Scottish Government's position - that there is 'no evidence' in Scotland that sea lice from salmon farming damages wild salmon and sea trout populations - is untenable.

'We do, after all, have the same sea lice, which all too often Scottish salmon farm operators are incapable of keeping under control, and the same wild fish.'

The review of more than 100 scientific papers found that up to 50,000 wild salmon die as a result of the parasites in Norway.

Dr Diane Baum, biologist with the Lochaber Fisheries Trust, added: 'We have not had the resources or effort here in Scotland put into this issue, but there is no

reason to think Scotland would be any different from Norway and Ireland.'

Mr Graham-Stewart added: 'The forthcoming parliamentary inquiry provides a timely opportunity to redress the balance between the drive for growth of the salmon farming industry, at all costs, and the need to protect wild fish.'

Scotland has more than 250 salmon farms, with 66 seawater finfish sites in Argyll and Bute, according to Aquaculture Scotland. The latest Scottish Government figures counted 1,486 staff employed nationwide in marine salmon production in 2016, and an estimated yield of 177,202 tonnes of Atlantic salmon in 2017, almost twice the number in 1997.

Roger Brook, chairman of Argyll District Salmon Fishery Board, also welcomed the report. He said: 'It has never been possible to have a meaningful and constructive dialogue with either the Scottish Government or the aquaculture industry as it refuses to accept that aquaculture has a harmful effect on wild salmon and sea trout stocks.

'It has to be hoped that this report, together with other evidence to be put before this year's government inquiry, will lead to an acceptance of the problem and to some assistance with what has become critical to the future of our wild fish stocks. The River Awe fish counter last year recorded the lowest figure since records began in 1964.

'Rivers within the aquaculture zone have suffered much more than those east coast rivers where there are no farms. In particular, the south-west Highland rivers of Argyll have suffered even more

Read your Oban Times ... in Antarctica!



The Oban Times may be a local newspaper but our reach stretches a long way. Reader Frithjof Kuepper sent us this photograph of himself reading a recent edition in Antarctica. Frithjof wrote: 'I am currently on an expedition to Antarctica, in the vicinity of Rothera Research Station, the UK's major base in Antarctica. As a long-time former Oban and Connel resident (and SAMS scientist, based at Dunstaffnage from 2003-2011, prior to moving to the University of Aberdeen), I have taken a copy of The Oban Times with me on this endeavour (in fact, the copy on sale while visiting Oban prior to leaving the UK in December), which I very much enjoy reading here, with lots of nostalgia for Oban and Argyll, and thinking of my friends there. Kind regards and greetings from Antarctica.'

than those further north as our fish have to encounter the most salmon farms on their migration routes.

'Comparison of salmon catches in the south-west Highlands compared with the east coast indicate that three times more salmon would be caught here today if our catches had followed

the trend of the east. We may not be able to do anything about the conditions in the North Atlantic, but government has the opportunity to do something about the management of the aquaculture industry.'

However, Scott Landsburgh, chief executive of the Scottish Salmon Producers' Organisation,

said it was a 'stretch' to describe the report as 'new', claiming the authors had rewritten much of their own work.

'Quantity is no substitute for quality in scientific debate,' he said.

'We are as aware as S&TC of the state of wild salmon stocks and have consistently pointed out

that scientific research has suggested that any impact of sea lice from farms on wild populations is minimal.

'It is interesting, however, that there is no acknowledgment of the impact of climate change which is undoubtedly having an effect on wild and farmed fish health across the board.'

THE BADLY damaged A85 at Connel is to close for five nights next month to be resurfaced.

The road will be shut from 7pm until 7am from Sunday February 11 to Thursday February 15, with the work expected to be finished by 7am on the Thursday.

According to Traffic Scotland, the width of the carriageway at this section means there is no option but to close the road to ensure the safety of the workforce and members of the public.

The A85 will therefore be closed in both directions each night. Traffic will be staged at either end of the closure then escorted through the work when safe to do so.

Alternatively, diversions will be in place via the A816 Oban to Lochgilphead, A83 Lochgilphead to Inveraray then the A819 Inveraray to Dalmlally or via A828 Connel to Ballachulish, A82 Ballachulish to Tyndrum then A85 Tyndrum to Dalmlally.

Access for emergency vehicles, local bus services and to properties within the boundaries of the work will be maintained, although some disruption is inevitable. The road will be fully open during the day, Monday February 12 to Wednesday February 14.



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Sunken trawler can be lifted for FAI

A FISHING boat which sunk off the isle of Easdale five years ago killing its skipper Scott MacAlister can be raised off the seabed as evidence in a fatal accident inquiry, which has been adjourned for the third time until June.

The 40-year-old father-of-three, who lived on the isle of Luing, was collecting prawns alone in the Firth of Lorne on April 25 2013 when the 8.7m vessel *Speedwell* foundered south of Insh Island, where it remains 83m below the surface. Mr MacAlister's body has not been found.

A fatal accident inquiry began at Oban Sheriff Court on Monday January 15, but on behalf of Mr MacAlister's family, advocate Lewis Kennedy asked for an adjournment 'so new lines of inquiry may be exhausted'.

Mr Kennedy told the court more time was needed to allow an 'essential witness', a 'former skipper who can provide a unique insight in the months prior to the accident', to give evidence. 'He is expected to provide vital information for the cross-examination of other witnesses,' he said.

Mr MacAlister's family also 'vigorously dispute' the findings of a naval architect's report into the cause of the accident, arguing they have their own 'wholly plausible theory'.

Mr MacAlister's father Peter, Mr Kennedy said, had new information on the identity of a diver who had removed a rope that had wrapped around the boat's propeller which, it was claimed, had caused the shaft to bend. The family wished to produce a similar or identical rope as a visual aid in court.

'No lifejackets were found on the sunken vessel or in the debris,' Mr Kennedy added, claiming that during an inspection in 2009 'the safety jackets that were aboard had been borrowed for the vessel for one day only, perhaps to falsely show the *Speedwell* was properly equipped.'

Furthermore, he added, 'the boat had foundered on rocks, possibly precipitating structural damage. This warrants further investigation. The family feel it is incumbent on us to investigate these issues.' Mr Kennedy said he was aware of the 'tortuous' procedural history, but 'hoped this is the final adjournment'.

Solicitor Michael Thompson, representing *Speedwell's* previous owner John Connell, told the court: 'I have instructions to object. This would be the third hearing discharged at the behest of the family.' However, after a pause, Mr Thompson said his client had withdrawn the objection.

'He gives his consent for the vessel to be recovered,' Mr Thompson said. 'The client is extremely disappointed that we are discharging for a third time.'

Sheriff Patrick Hughes adjourned the hearing until June 4.

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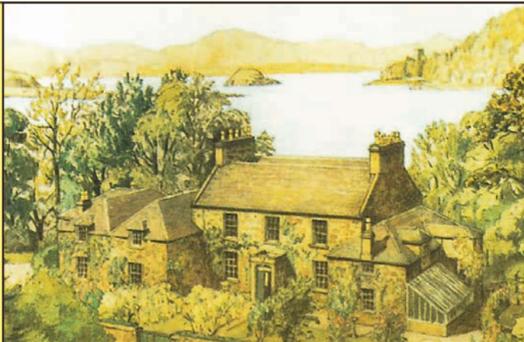
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RBS under new attack over Argyll and Isles bank closures

MARTIN LAING
mlaing@obantimes.co.uk

THE Royal Bank of Scotland has come under renewed and sustained attack over its plans to close a number of rural branches in Argyll and the Isles.

Argyll and Bute MP Brendan O'Hara last week fired a broadside at RBS during a debate at Westminster.

In a passionate debate at Westminster on Thursday January 11, Mr O'Hara demanded the UK government use the power it has, as the bank's majority shareholder, to halt the branch closure plans.

He said: 'RBS plans to close three branches in my constituency, in Campbeltown, Rothesay and Inveraray. Those

ruthless closures will not only hurt local businesses and individuals, they will be hugely damaging to Argyll and Bute.

'We have actively promoted Argyll and Bute as a great place to live, work, raise a family and do business.

'These closures undermine all that hard work.

'One would have thought that RBS, having been bailed out by the public purse to the tune of £45 billion, would display a degree of humility. Not a chance.

'Its decision to turn its back on so many communities, particularly those where the RBS branch is the last in town, is a scandalous abdication of its social responsibility to rural Scotland and to the people who were forced to keep it afloat

when it risked sinking without trace during the financial crisis.

'If the government refuses to intervene, can the minister explain to my constituents, particularly those in Inveraray who will be left without a single bank and who will be faced with an 80-mile round trip to the nearest bank, why it has chosen not to use the power it has to stop these closures?

'The government should accept its responsibility and protect my constituents from the RBS hatchet-men.'

Western Isles MP Angus Brendan MacNeil called on Ross McEwan, chief executive of RBS, to 'come out of hiding and face customers in Barra'.

RBS has responded to Mr MacNeil's letter stating that

it would not be revisiting its decision to close the Castlebay branch in June 2018.

Mr MacNeil said: 'Instead of coming to Barra to meet customers, Ross McEwan sent a representative who dodged in and out of the island on Friday January 5.

'RBS says it has considered the matter carefully but it will not be revisiting its decision, yet it has not consulted its customers or carried out an economic impact assessment of the decision to close the Castlebay branch.

'RBS should drop Scotland from its name, such is the contempt it is showing our country.

'An eye-watering £16 million was paid in bonuses to RBS senior executives, which would pay the wages of the staff at the

Castlebay branch for about 266 years. That is the level of greed we are seeing here and not just greed but cowardice and irresponsibility.

'Ross McEwan and RBS need to have the courage of their convictions and meet with islanders.

'Is the bank owned by the government or do the bankers own the government? The UK government cannot play Pontius Pilate with this issue.'

Meanwhile, the Federation of Small Businesses (FSB) said this week that 'it is essential that the UK government establishes a minimum level of service provision before it is too late'.

Hisashi Kuboyama, from FSB, said: 'Local businesses and the communities they serve

need banking services. The fact remains that cash is still the most frequently used payment method by consumers and firms can't deposit cash using an app.'

'This round of RBS closures will leave Inveraray with no bank serving businesses, residents and visitors.

'Without a bank, business owners would find it very difficult to handle cash securely and manage cash flow, while they would be forced to spend hours traipsing back and forth to the bank, instead of running a business.

'This would undoubtedly affect productivity of local firms and also put off businesses coming to the area. Its long-term economic impact could be significant.'

Islay was without internet for eight days

PEOPLE on Islay were without internet for eight days over the festive period.

Due to a technical fault, from December 27 until January 4, islanders had no access online.

BT said the delay in fixing the fault was because of the weather and availability of ferries.

'The people of Islay had no idea what was going on,' councillor for Kintyre and the Islands Alastair Redman said.

'We were not being told the truth. The thing that bothered everyone was every time they called they were told there wasn't a problem.

'But on January 3, they identified that there was a fault and had it sorted on the fourth.

'On one day I received 60 complaints from my constituents.

'I think they think there's a wi-fi hotspot round the corner - they just don't get rural Scotland.'

Councillor Redman also wanted impacted customers to receive compensation for loss of business.

'In rural areas, if you have a business, 95 per cent of your trade is online,' he added.

A spokesman for BT told The Herald: 'We were aware of an intermittent broadband fault which affected a small number of customers on Islay. The fix has been delayed by the weather and the availability of ferries over New Year.

'Customers connected to the new fibre broadband network are not affected by this fault. Anyone facing problems should report this to their broadband service provider. We're sorry for any inconvenience.

'The fix, after a hardware change, was put in place on the afternoon of Wednesday January 3.

'We will continue with diagnostic checks and enhanced monitoring and confirm later on. A power cycle of the router (reboot) may be required in some cases.'

Estate says 'thank-ewe' to Canna

THE Isle of Canna is collaborating with another National Trust for Scotland property, Inverewe, on a new sustainable land use project.

Sixteen ewes from the Isle of Canna's famed stock, managed under the husbandry of Geraldine MacKinnon, have arrived to allow the Inverewe Estate to start farming its own land.

'The idea is that the Canna sheep graze the conservation meadows in the in-bye fields on the Inverewe estate, improving the biodiversity of the area by encouraging wildflowers and the insects and birds that they bring. We can then use the sheep to provide quality wholesome local meat to be consumed by our visitors in Osgood's Café at Inverewe,' said Kevin Frediani, the estate property manager.

'Any excess produce could be used within the trust at other regional properties such as Culloiden and Brodie Castle. This work builds on the great work across other trust areas.'

New lifeboat for the Western Isles

THE Western Isles is to be given a new lifeboat. Leverburgh RNLI's new Shannon-class vessel - named the *Stella and Humfrey Berkeley* - was launched into the water for the first time at the RNLI's lifeboat centre in Poole this week.

The RNLI *Stella and Humfrey Berkeley* is the 13th Shannon to roll off the RNLI's production line. Each costs £2.2 million to build and is capable of reaching speeds up to 25 knots.

The lifeboat will now be put through sea trials in and around Poole, with arrival at Leverburgh on Harris scheduled for April 21. An official naming ceremony is planned for Saturday July 14. It is anticipated the boat will enter service during the first week of May.

Between now and then, Leverburgh's volunteer crew will undertake additional training to familiarise themselves with how their new Shannon will work.

Leverburgh RNLI lifeboat station was established just five years ago, initially for a trial period of one year. Following a successful year for the new volunteer crew, the decision was taken to make the station permanent.

The station is currently home to RNLI's *Royal Thames*, one of the RNLI's Mersey-class lifeboats. While the *Royal Thames* has served Leverburgh and her previous stations well, the boat is reaching the end of its working life.

The Shannon is the latest class of all-weather lifeboat to join the RNLI fleet. It is the first modern all-weather lifeboat to be propelled by water jets instead of traditional propellers, making her the RNLI's most agile and manoeuvrable all-weather lifeboat yet - even in the shallowest



The *Stella and Humfrey Berkeley* is lowered into the water for the first time.

of waters. These features make the Shannon particularly suitable for serving the often-challenging Sound of Harris, and beyond. The new lifeboat is also capable of reaching speeds up to 25 knots, which will mean the crew can reach casualties in a shorter space of time.

Leverburgh RNLI's honorary president,

Hamish Taylor, said: 'Over the five and a half years of its service, and with more than 80 service calls already carried out, Leverburgh lifeboat station, its operating systems and crew have steadily matured in skills and experience.'

'Throughout this time also, the communities of Harris and North Uist have taken the station to

heart and have been consistently and practically supportive, so we extend our heartfelt thanks.'

'The arrival of the Shannon in Leverburgh brings with it new opportunities to get involved in the work of the RNLI. Anybody interested becoming a crew member or coxswain can contact Chris Ross, at boat1236@icloud.com or on 07899 786574.'

Young people take over An Lanntair

AS PART OF the Year of Young People, An Lanntair in Stornoway has received funding from EventScotland, part of VisitScotland, to hand over the venue to young people to deliver their own arts festival called Las/Ignite!

The Las/Ignite! festival takes place over a week during October. It promises to be an innovative event to celebrate and promote the creative talent of young people from the Outer Hebrides, leading to tangible outcomes for their careers and enterprise.

Young people will programme An Lanntair's auditorium with gigs, films, theatre and cabaret events. They will curate exhibitions for the main gallery, bar and mezzanine exhibition spaces, and will be responsible for marketing, design and stewarding.

In addition, a creative industries symposium will be staged during the festival, supporting



An Lanntair.

young people with learning how to access and grow careers in the arts and creative industries.

Central to the project is the An Lanntair youth board (Board not Bored). Board not Bored will be a group of young people (under 26) who will steer the direction of the project. They will be responsible for interviewing and appointing a young person as festival coordinator (also under 26) and researching and shaping the programme.

Board not Bored member Ella Macaulay said: 'It is so exciting to have the opportunity to be part of and shape the arts programme at An Lanntair and

create a week of diverse and memorable events.'

An Lanntair CEO Elly Fletcher added: 'I can't wait to see young people come into our space and tell us what they want to see. This will be a genuine takeover of everything at An Lanntair. This is a fabulous new festival that will celebrate the young creative talent we know is there across our islands.'

An Lanntair will also announce a call for applications for young students or postgraduates from the Outer Hebrides, Shetland and Orkney to a newly created inter-island arts placement, giving them the chance to learn in a different - but not unfamiliar - environment, while receiving a week of one-to-one tuition and advice in their chosen field of study. The products of this innovative exchange will be showcased during the festival week. The call for applications was launched on www.lanntair.com on Friday January 12.

Concern grows at plans for air traffic control

POLITICIANS and trades unions have called a guarantee over jobs and passenger safety after Highlands and Islands Airports Ltd revealed plans to centralise its air traffic control operations in Inverness.

HIAL said last week it wanted to 'future proof' its operations in Scotland with an estimated £28 million investment in state-of-the-art air traffic management technology.

HIAL is looking to close its air traffic control towers at Sumburgh, Dundee, Inverness, Wick, John O'Groats, Kirkwall, Stornoway and Benbecula.

Trade union Prospect's aviation officer David Avery said: 'Any centralised monitoring system will be dependent on a reliable, resilient and secure communications infrastructure between the mainland and the

islands which simply does not exist.

'HIAL is gambling on this, and Prospect believes this is gambling with people's safety. Air traffic control provides high quality skilled, highly paid employment in the islands with many controllers recruited and trained locally.

'Centralisation will remove these roles from the islands. We do not believe the report has given sufficient weight to these considerations and HIAL's roles as an employer in the Highlands and Islands.'

Highlands and Islands MSP John Finnie said: 'It is imperative that these highly skilled jobs are retained across the Highlands and Islands, rather than be centralised in Inverness.'

'I understand Prospect's concerns around any potential

job losses, or indeed any future post deletion, given the single site decision.

'It would be interesting to understand what consideration, if any, was given to decentralising this proposal providing all the jobs in the Western or Northern Isles.

'While understandable that HIAL wishes to modernise its air traffic control operation, it must ensure that any changes to the current model prioritise the safe operation of its airports.'

HIAL managing director Inglis Lyon said last week the decision was significant, adding: 'Our overriding priority is, and will always be, to deliver safe and secure air navigation services that will keep our airports open for local communities for the long term. Having already involved our air traffic control

staff and key stakeholders in the full review of our air traffic management operations by leading aviation consultancy Helios, the board has agreed in principle with the Helios recommendation to further pursue the remote towers solution.'

Shetland MSP Tavish Scott said staff 'must be told what their future is', while the consultant's report to make savings on the airport budget 'misses two vital points'.

Mr Scott said: 'What is the back-up? What happens if the cameras covering the runway fail so that the controllers sitting in their Inverness bunker cannot see the runway or the main road that crosses it?'

'Sumburgh is the busiest airport in the HIAL network and now makes money rather than costing money.'

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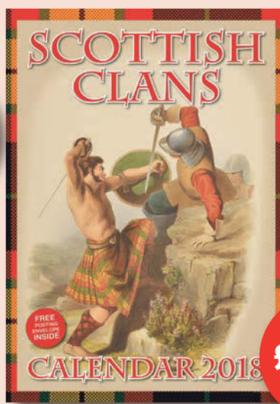
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Expert issues new call to save road safety unit

THE fight is on to convince Argyll and Bute Council to spare its road safety unit from closure.

The council is faced with some tough decisions in coming weeks as it balances the books for the coming financial year's budget. All council services, including front line ones, are under pressure.

The road safety unit, with its budget of the work equivalent of 1.7 officers, is one of the cuts being suggested to lessen the impact elsewhere.

With a career of 32 years in the field, Carl Olivarius, who retired as the council's road safety officer in 2009, believes this would be a big mistake. He was 'shocked to hear the news'.

'I am not being protective of my old job,' he said. 'Road safety is one of the success stories of the UK and Scotland, from seatbelts to crash helmets to the engineering of cars on the road today. The whole movement has been a tremendous success story. The children we teach today are the drivers of tomorrow.'

Prior to joining Argyll and Bute in 1982, he worked for Strathclyde Regional Council and the Corporation of Glasgow.

One of the most visible aspects of road safety work is that of the people who carry out the Scottish Cycle Training Scheme. 'The schools' education programme is part of this proven success story,' Mr Olivarius said.

Ruling councillors to meet at luxury spa

The ruling group of Argyll and Bute Council is to meet at a four-star hotel to discuss how to save money in the forthcoming budget.

On Saturday January 27, the group is due to gather at the Loch Fyne Hotel and Spa at Inveraray for a meeting to thrash out what stays and what goes from this year's council budget.

A number of cuts to services are expected.

The year-on-year cuts to the council's funding mean that the budget gap is estimated to be as much as £8.5 million in 2018/19, and £33.9 million over next three years.

But what many people do not know is that road safety officers work together with engineers on the design of roads and, if accidents are occurring regularly at one spot, recommending the roads department requires to do something about it. The proof that road safety units work can be seen in the impressive drop in the number of all casualties and fatalities, Mr Olivarius believes.

'The total number in Scotland in 1966 was 32,280; in 2016 it was 10,910. That is impressive, given the growth of the population and the number of people who now own cars.'

The proposal to justify the cut says that road safety information will be available through other organisations. But Mr Olivarius has studied the Police Scotland and Scottish Fire and Rescue local plans and said: 'I can find no hint that they are ready to accept responsibility.'

He added that the council also had a responsibility to play a major role in road casualty reduction as contained in numerous publications, including Scotland's Road Safety Framework to 2020, RoSPA National Road Safety Committee, Making Road Safety Count and the Road Traffic Act 1988 (Section 39).

Argyll and Bute Council said: 'Year on year cuts to our funding mean that, like all councils, we must make changes to how we work.'

'We would like to do everything our communities want us to but this unfortunately isn't an option. Our budget gap is estimated to be as much as £8.5m in 2018/19, and £33.9m over next three years.'

'We consult local people so that we can base how we change on their feedback. Savings proposals, which include removing the road safety unit, will be considered at the budget meeting in February.'

Driver convicted of killing grandmother

A DRIVER killed a grandmother in a 'catastrophic' crash on a notorious accident blackspot near Oban, a court heard last week.

Christopher Taylor ploughed head on into the car of Yvonne Shann after he tried to overtake another vehicle.

Mrs Shann had to be cut free from her Citroen - but never recovered from her injuries and died more than a week later in hospital.

The tragedy occurred on the rural A816 Lochgilphead to Oban road on December 30, 2015. Taylor had a young child in his Peugeot at the time.

The 30-year-old now faces jail after he was found guilty at the High Court in Glasgow on Wednesday January 10 of causing death by careless driving. Taylor, of Rothesay, Isle of Bute, will learn his fate next month.

The High Court heard how the crash happened at night on the 'twisty and windy' road. Jurors



Yvonne Shann.

heard that a driver in front of Taylor 'knew something was going to happen' when he went to overtake him.

This motorist feared the worst and 'held his steering wheel a lot tighter' as Taylor smashed into Mrs Shann's car.

The court was told the crash happened in a 'split second' and

that 'the noise was terrible'.

It was also heard that Mrs Shann - who lived in Kilminver, south of Oban - could have done nothing to avoid being hit.

The mum-of-three died on January 11 at the Royal Alexandra Hospital in Paisley.

Taylor, who stayed in Ardrishaig at the time, accepted being responsible for the accident.

In her closing speech to the jury, prosecutor Jane Farquharson said what happened had been a 'catastrophic error' on Taylor's part.

She added he had not been a 'careful and competent' motorist that night.

Taylor had gone on trial accused of causing death by dangerous driving before being convicted of the reduced charge.

Taylor will be sentenced on February 7 in Livingston.

Lord Beckett continued bail and banned him from the road meantime.

Distillery marks International Scotch Day

OBAN Distillery will be among a number to throw open its doors for free tours when Scotland's national drink is celebrated across the globe on Thursday February 8 to mark International Scotch Day.

Now in its second year, the day is a true celebration of Scotland's greatest gift, cementing Scotch's status as both the world's favourite whisky and the perfect drink to be shared with good company.

Celebrations will take place in homes, bars, clubs and events across the world, as Scotch aficionados, enthusiasts and fans alike raise a glass to their favourite whisky.

In Scotland, Diageo will open the doors of its distillery visitor centres for free tours on February 8, 10 and 11 as part of the celebration. The visitor centres are at Blair Athol, Caol Ila, Cardhu, Clynelish, Dalwhinnie, Glenkinchie, Glen Ord, Lagavulin, Oban, Royal Lochnagar and Talisker.

The public will also be given a rare opportunity to go behind-the-scenes at the Diageo Archive in Menstrie, near Alloa.

Join the celebration and get involved by using #LoveScotch #InternationalScotchDay and #jointhecelebration. For more information visit facebook.com/LoveofScotch.

POLICE FILES

with Sergeant Iain MacNicol

Thief fell off bike

BETWEEN 10pm on Friday January 12 and 11.45am on Saturday January 13, a men's mountain bike was stolen from a common close in George Street, Oban.

Subsequently, the bike was recovered after a man aged 36 fell from it on Corran Brae, Oban, about 11pm on Sunday January 14. The man suffered injuries and was taken to hospital by ambulance.

The man was also allegedly found in possession of a number of tablets (suspected to be diazepam) which will be analysed.

A report will be submitted to the procurator fiscal.

Theft by shoplifting

AT ABOUT 8.10pm on Tuesday January 9, in the Lidl Store, Soroba Road, Oban, a woman aged 21 allegedly stole an item. Police attended and the woman was issued with a recorded police warning.

House searched

AT ABOUT 11.45am on Wednesday January 10, a house in North Connel was searched by police. A 37-year-old man was found to be in possession of cannabis, and was charged with being concerned in the supply of cannabis and allowing his house to be used by others to consume drugs.

A report will be submitted to the procurator fiscal.

At the same incident, two other men, aged 25 and 38 years, were found to be in possession of a small amount of cannabis, and were issued with a recorded police warning.

Drugs discovered

AT ABOUT 11pm on Tuesday January 9, on Corran Esplanade in Oban, a man aged 20 was searched by police and was found to be in possession of a small amount of cannabis. The man was charged and a report will be submitted to the procurator fiscal.

Abusive behaviour

AT ABOUT 3am on Saturday January 13, following a report of a man behaving in an abusive manner towards a woman in a house in Barcaldine, a 38-year-old male was detained. The man was later arrested and charged with abusive behaviour. He was held for court and a report was submitted to the procurator fiscal.

IF ANY member of the public has information in relation to the above, or to any incident, they can contact their local police office on telephone number 101, or anonymously through Crime-stoppers on 0800 555 111.



Kate Little will be dancing in the Corran Halls as part of the cast of *Giselle*.

Dancer Kate performs in Oban

WHEN Ballet West brings its new production of *Giselle ou les Willis* to Oban's Corran Halls on Thursday February 8, one of the dancers will be in her home town.

Kate Little, from Connel, will be among the cast from the ballet school based at Taynuilt.

Kate is now a second-year student on the BA Hons degree course, having started out on Ballet West's Outreach programme.

This is the first time that Ballet West has toured *Giselle* in a production by the company's choreographer Daniel F Job.

The tour to eight venues across Scotland opens at the MacRobert Arts Centre in Stirling on January 26. The new production features two outstanding young dancers, Natasha Watson, and Uyu Hiro-moto, sharing the lead role of *Giselle*.

Nearly 100 of Ballet West's students, with guest artists, and students from Ballet West's Glasgow and Edinburgh Associates, will take part in the tour to Paisley, Greenock, Livingston, Oban, Glasgow, Inverness and finishing in Edinburgh on February 17.

Giselle is described as a ballet-pantomime in two acts. It was first performed in Paris in 1841. Gillian Barton, Ballet West's principal, said: 'For students on the Hons degree and HND courses, our popular annual tours provide invaluable experience in performing for audiences in many different venues across Scotland.'

'Performing here at home in Oban is always particularly special for us. The annual ballet tours provide an essential element of the training as dance artists of the future and a wonderful opportunity for students to dance alongside professionals. The high artistic standards achieved in our productions never fail to attract appreciative audiences of all ages, especially in Oban.'

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The National Theatre of Scotland is core funded by the Scottish Government. The National Theatre of Scotland, a company limited by guarantee and registered in Scotland (SC234270), is a registered Scottish charity (SC033377).

Photo by Eoin Carey

Ex-Rockfield pupil receives CBE

DAVID MCPHEE
dmcphée@obantimes.co.uk

AN OBAN businessman who received a CBE in the 2018 New Year Honours' list says if he can do it, anyone can.

Paddy Crerar CBE, of Crerar Hotels, received his Commander of the Order of the British Empire award for services to hospitality and charity.

The 49-year-old said: 'It was a huge shock and a real, real honour - I did not expect it.'

The honours recognise the

achievements and service of extraordinary people across the UK.

Crerar Hotels has a portfolio which consists of 11 hotels, including Oban Bay Hotel and the Isle of Mull Hotel and Spa.

However, 50 per cent of the company's profits go into the Crerar Trust, which has seen it donate £4 million in the past 10 years to improve the quality of everyday lives in local communities.

Speaking about receiving confirmation of his CBE, Mr

Crerar said: 'I thought it was one of my friends winding me up. I could not believe it was a CBE.'

'The truth is, it's not a reflection on what I have done, it's what I have done working with a bunch of people - people I have worked with for 30 years.'

'I am delighted it was me, but it could have been any number of people working in hospitality.'

'I think it's good that a wee boy from Oban, who went to Rockfield Primary School, can somehow receive a Queen's

award. If I can do it, anyone can. 'I am just flabbergasted and delighted - delighted for all the people who work hard behind the scenes.'

'Scotland is the best destination in the world for hospitality and Oban is a jewel in the crown for tourism and it's something we should be proud of.'

Crerar Hotels uses Fairtrade goods whenever possible and actively sources its products.

The equal opportunities employer also uses local produce and suppliers.



Paddy Crerar said he was 'flabbergasted' to be honoured.

TIMESLINE

Event will teach CPR for babies

AFTER almost losing their newborn son last year, an Oban family is organising a CPR training day to take place later this month.

The event, to be held in the Rockfield Centre on January 27 from noon-4pm, will teach people how to give CPR to babies and is open to everyone.

Fearghas and Natalie Lafferty almost lost their son Murray last year when he stopped breathing. Fearghas said: 'My son was really not well last year and he needed CPR. Friends and family said they wouldn't know how to do that. So Natalie had the idea of doing a training day to raise money and to make sure that anyone who wanted to know could do CPR.'

There will be something for everyone at the event, with raffles taking place as well as games for children. All proceeds will go to the Glasgow Children's Hospital and the air ambulance.

Expert will give talk on Viking find

ON SUNDAY January 21, Dr Oliver Harris of Leicester University will give a talk to the Lorn Archaeological and Historical Society on the Viking ship burial discovered in 2011 at Port an Eilean Mhòir in Ardnamuchan.

Dated to the 10th century, the burial consists of a Viking boat about 5m (16 feet) long by 1.5 metres (4.9 feet) wide in which a man was laid to rest with his shield, sword and spear as well as other goods.

Dr Harris said: 'This was someone really important. He needed his axe, his sword, his spear, his shield; he needed things that he could defend himself with and attack others. So he was obviously someone of really high status.'

The meeting will be at 7.30pm in St Columba's Cathedral Hall and is open to non-members for £3 admission.

Group receives £10,000 to help build Oban centre

OBAN Viewpoint Group has received a grant of £10,000 giving its plans to build a community centre in the town a massive boost.

At the monthly meeting, held in Soroba Community Centre on the first Tuesday of the month, Councillor Roddy McCuish revealed the news.

'The viewpoint group was awarded £10,000 from the Agnes Angus fund,' he said.

The money will be used to pay for a feasibility study to determine if building a community centre in Soroba, overlooking the town, is a possibility.

In the past, the group has organised multiple fundraising events, such as cleaning the area where the centre will be located - at the back of Shuna Terrace - multiple coffee mornings, a penny mile, and seasonal events in Soroba Community Centre.

Chairwoman of Oban Viewpoint Group Marri Malloy said: 'We are absolutely over the moon with the funding.'

'It is funding that just came up so I asked the council and I was told to apply for it and I applied for £10,000, hoping for £5,000, but our four councillors pushed it through on our behalf, so we can only thank them.'

'It's the first time we have felt like we are getting somewhere.'

Oban South and the Isles Councillor McCuish also revealed that the Rockfield Centre received £10,000 from the Agnes Angus fund and Oban Winter Festival secured £6,000.



Volunteers helped Oban Viewpoint Group clear up the area where the community centre would sit.

Grants available to community groups

GROUPS across Argyll are being encouraged to submit applications for funding from Argyll and Bute Council's Supporting Communities Fund.

Organisations can apply for up to £2,500 per project or event. The closing date for applications is Monday January 22.

The Supporting Communities Fund programme aims to help kickstart new projects and events. Criteria for funding has been widened to include applications from parent councils and community councils.

Application forms can be found on the website: <http://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/council-and-government/third-sector-grants>.

Memorial plans for 'beloved' quad bike victim Paul



Paul was tragically killed in an accident on New Year's Day.

THE family and friends of Paul Thomson, a father-of-two who died in a quad bike accident in Lerags near Oban on New Year's Day, are crowdfunding for a memorial bench by Kilbride Kirk, overlooking the glen he 'so loved'.

Support has already exceeded the estimated cost of £2,000, with any surplus going towards the Friends of Kilbride, a charity dedicated to preserving the historic church.

Liam Griffin, who, like Paul, volunteered for the Friends of Kilbride, wrote: 'Following the recent tragic and sudden death of my friend and neighbour, Paul Thomson, his family approached

Friends of Kilbride and enquired whether they might erect a memorial bench for Paul within Kilbride's grounds.'

'The trustees approved the request, and Paul's family and friends have now begun fundraising to bring the plan to fruition.'

On its JustGiving website, which had reached £2,680 on Tuesday, the 'Lerags Glen community' explained: 'Paul Thomson, beloved husband, father, son, brother, relative and dear friend died in an accident on New Year's Day, leaving his wife Lauren and two small children. The community of Lerags Glen, Oban, where Paul lived, wish to create a stone

memorial for Paul in the ancient ruined churchyard of Kilbride.'

'Paul and Lauren moved to rural Scotland from London in 2015 in search of a peaceful life and close-knit community.'

'The peace was already here, but they enriched the glen; their openness, generosity and fun-loving natures quickly establishing them at the heart of the Lerags community. Paul was well-loved by everyone here and will be much missed.'

'A stone bench carved with Paul's name will be set at the high point of the churchyard, looking over the glen he so loved. A place where Lauren and the kids can

sit with the sun, the beautiful views and the robins. A place where neighbours in the glen and his friends from Oban, London and elsewhere can come and remember him. And those who visit Kilbride from all over the world will be able to read about him - an important part of its 800-year story.'

'Paul had become a trustee of the Friends of Kilbride charity, which is seeking to preserve the old church and graveyard. We don't know exactly how much the bench will be - this is a rough estimate - but please know that any surplus raised will go to Friends of Kilbride.'

Lifeboat's new pontoon is due to open

THE new pontoon for Oban lifeboat is due to open at the end of this month at Port Beag.

Once in place it will make it easier for the lifeboat crew to disembark any casualties or medivacs by stretcher to an awaiting ambulance on the slipway.

A spokesman for the station said it would also make response times even quicker as it is faster to board a boat via a pontoon.

The demolition work on the lifeboat station side of Port Beag is now complete and banking work has started. Once this is completed the pontoon

and linkspan, which are ready and waiting, will be installed.

McLaughlin and Harvey of Belfast and Glasgow are civil engineers for the work taking place at the Port Beag slipway, owned by Argyll and Bute Council, alongside the Oban lifeboat station. D A Macdonald of Lochgilphead are sub-subcontractors.

A spokesman for Argyll and Bute Council said: 'We have given the RNLI's contractor permission to use our slip so they can gain access to their site. This has been done on the basis that they tidy up the waste area at the top of the slip next to the road.'



Work is continuing on the new mooring for the lifeboat.

A chance to try something new this year

IT FEELS as if Christmas and New Year are a distant memory now and, for those of you looking for a new challenge or perhaps even a new career, then Argyll College UHI is worth a thought, writes Oban town ambassador Kay McDonald.

This evening (Thursday January 18), between 5pm and 7pm, the college is holding a Winter Warmer Information Event which is a relaxed, informal evening (with nibbles) to highlight the courses available from this month.

If you fancy a change but don't know what to do, then this could be the event to inspire you.

If you'd like to try some-

thing less formal but equally inspiring, perhaps Oban Photographic Club might be a good way to start the year.

It meets on Monday January 22 in the Regent Hotel at 7.15pm.

On Sunday at 7.30pm, the Lorn Archaeological and Historical Society will be meeting in St Columba's Cathedral Hall for a presentation on Viking burials in Ardnamuchan.

There are many local clubs which might encourage you to try something new or expand an interest you already have. It just takes that first step and it's never as daunting as you think it'll be.

For those of you who want to relax and let your inner cowboy

loose, then the Corran Halls is the place to be on Saturday night for The Legends of American Country Tribute Show, which sounds like an enjoyable evening with lots of good music. What better way to spend a Saturday night?

The Corran Halls is also to host an event on Sunday with the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity service at 11am, when local congregations will come together.

For more details of these events, check online at Oban What's On. Have a scroll through the events and you'll find something to interest you.

This week's photo feels as if it's miles from the centre of town but it's not.

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Mounting problem: clockwise from top left are overflowing bins in Oban's High Street, Colonsay Terrace, Scalpay Terrace and at the recycling station in Tesco car park.

Oban bin crisis could be resolved

DAVID MCPHEE
dmcph@obantimes.co.uk

A SOLUTION to the bins problem in Oban could be in the works after a productive meeting last week.

Argyll and Bute Council's policy lead for roads and amenity services, Councillor Roddy McCuish, along with colleagues, met with Argyll Community Housing Association (ACHA) on Wednesday. The Oban South and the Isles councillor said: 'We had

a very productive meeting with ACHA and there will be further meetings next week in an attempt to solve the Soroba challenge.

'However, it's not just Soroba. We have to look right across Oban, Lorn and the Isles.

'But I am hopeful we have found a way forward to have more recycling bins in Soroba.'

Councillor McCuish said they will also have to look at the reliability of the council's fleet.

Bins throughout Oban and Lorn were left overflowing

after a number of lorry breakdowns hindered collections.

'We can only apologise for the operational difficulties we have been experiencing with the Oban and Lorn refuse and recycling service,' Councillor McCuish added.

'These have been due to a number of vehicle breakdowns which have unfortunately happened all at the one time, coupled with the difficulty of getting hire vehicles in over the festive period.

'Our colleagues in fleet have worked hard to get the vehicles back on the road and, through some controlled overtime, our bin teams are now up to date on domestic/general waste and commercial waste collections. The issue has not been with the level of manpower across the service but with the availability of vehicles to carry out the collections.

'We endeavour wherever possible to catch up on any collections which are not carried out as planned, and manage to do so most of the time.

'During periods of disruption we prioritise domestic/general waste collection over recycling as there are no environmental problems with recyclable material sitting out a little longer, whereas there can be with domestic/general waste.'

The decision was made to leave the recycling bins until the next scheduled uplift.

Councillor for Oban North and Lorn Kieron Green said: 'I am disappointed at the problems that have occurred with the lorries. I accept this has

resulted in an unacceptable situation regarding missed collections and, as a council, we will be working to ensure that this is not repeated.'

Fellow councillor Julie McKenzie was keen to ensure that areas across her constituency were seen to. She said: 'Residents of Argyll and Bute all deserve the same service from the public purse, regardless of where they live. Whether you live on Lismore or in the centre of Dunollie, your rights to expect service are the same.'

TIMESLINE

Have your say on Gaelic language

ARGYLL and Bute Council is inviting people to give their views on its Gaelic language plan.

It provides information on how the council, in partnership with other organisations, will address the needs of individuals, groups and communities who continue to see Gaelic as a major part of their lives.

People are invited to provide feedback on the plan by February 19.

It can be accessed by visiting www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/gaelic. Please send your thoughts and views to gaelic@argyll-bute.gov.uk.

The council's lead for Gaelic, Councillor Robin Currie, will take part in a consultation this month via video conference. If anyone would like to take part contact gaelic@argyll-bute.gov.uk. Councillor Currie will also be available to discuss the plan at 11am on Friday February 9 at the Furan Centre in Oban's Corran Halls.

Funding for green energy proposals

E.ON is encouraging charities and community groups in Argyll and the Highlands and Islands to apply for up to £2,000 of funding through its Energising Communities Fund before Monday January 29.

To be eligible, organisations must submit a request which supports activities that help bring about a reduction in their own energy use, help generate energy from a renewable source, or provide energy efficiency advice for people. Groups can apply for funding of up to £2,000.

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New national post for Annie

AN ARGYLL health chief has taken up a top job in a charity fighting Parkinson's disease across Scotland, vowing to help the rising number of sufferers access services as budgets are stretched.

Annie Macleod, who was the Oban, Lorn and the Isles locality manager for the Argyll and Bute Health and Social Care Partnership, has taken up a role as director of Parkinson's UK in Scotland.

Annie lives with her husband on the Morvern peninsula, north-west of Oban. She has two grown-up daughters - one is a junior doctor and the other works in social policy research.

Annie said: 'It is a great privilege to take up this role with Parkinson's UK. People with or affected by Parkinson's had a key decision-making role during the recruitment process and it's exciting to be joining an organisation that puts people with the



Annie Macleod.

condition front and centre. Last week we announced that the numbers of people in Scotland with Parkinson's had increased to more than 12,000.

'This figure is set to double within two generations and presents a real challenge for health and social care providers. My job is to help the fantastic

team of Parkinson's UK staff and volunteers in Scotland ensure that people affected by the condition have access to the services they need. With budgets and services already stretched, it's vital that providers plan and prepare for the rising numbers of people living with the condition.

'It is sobering that one in every 375 adults has the condition. And more than 10,400 of those people are over 65, many experiencing falls or unplanned admissions to hospital. Strengthening our work in reaching out to everyone affected by Parkinson's is ever more critical.

'My first step is to listen to what the Parkinson's community in Scotland has to say and I'll be out and about meeting as many people and local support groups as possible. I look forward to working with them, and with our partners in the health, scientific and social care sectors across Scotland.'

Trust celebrates ruby anniversary

THE Argyll and Bute Trust celebrates its ruby anniversary this year and is marking the occasion by publishing a brochure and making two awards.

The trust, an independent charity, was created in 1977 to celebrate the Queen's silver jubilee.

The trust received its charter on November 20, 1978, and is about to celebrate 40 years of charitable giving.

Designed to assist the people of the original Argyll and Bute area, it was anticipated it would exist for a relatively brief period and then disappear into history.

Due to the commitment of the original trustees and those who have followed, the trust has gone from strength to strength and is about to celebrate its ruby anniversary.

The trust's objectives are simple: to assist and, where possible, to make a difference in the complicated and complex world

that is the 21st century. Individuals and groups can receive grant assistance in projects involving education, the arts, sports and community schemes.

To mark this ruby anniversary, the trustees have decided to make the following two grants.

In August 2018, provide every child in the original Argyll and Bute area entering school at primary one with a high viz vest.

A grant of £2,500 to an individual or a community group resident in the original Argyll and Bute area. The core objective of the trust is to make a difference to the community and the successful applicant will have to prove to the trustees that their project is worthy of this generous grant.

There is no formal application form for this grant. Applications should be in plain language, describing the project in detail and why the individual or group should receive the award.

Applications should be sent to Dan Edgar, chairman, 31 Ardbeg Road, Rothesay, Isle of Bute, PA20 0NI, by Tuesday March 6. Applications received after that date will not be considered. The envelope should be clearly marked 18/40/GA. The successful applicant will be notified and a public announcement will be made at the trust's AGM in Oban in June.

The trust also intends to produce an anniversary brochure to mark the ruby anniversary highlighting its work. It would be helpful if any group or individual who has received grant assistance in the past 10 years would write (also to Dan Edgar) indicating the benefits of the grant, and pictures would also be appreciated. Suitable selected quotes and pictures would appear in the brochure. Material submitted can only be returned with the provision of a stamped address envelope.

Billy and Yvonne set the big date

BILLY Irving, the pirate hunter freed from four years of 'hell' in an Indian jail after trumped-up weapons charges were quashed by an appeal judge before Christmas, has named the date when he

will tie the knot with his fiancée Yvonne MacHugh.

Yvonne, 29, who campaigned tirelessly for Billy's release, said she was 'beyond excited' to finally wed the 37-year-old ex-soldier,

who hails from Connel, on March 24 in Paisley.

After the announcement the couple, who have a two-year-old son, William, were swamped with good wishes.

January Sale



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Coll

COLL and the Cosmos will take place in March and October this year. The star-gazing weekend course on the island makes the most of the island's incredible dark sky. Designed to appeal to as wide an audience as possible, the course is a great way to get to know the night sky. No prior knowledge of astronomy is needed. The events will be held on March 10-11 and October 6-7. For prices and more information telephone 01879 230217 or email info@collbunkhouse.co.uk. A Burn's Night Supper will be held on Coll on Saturday January 27. To book, contact An Cridhe. Yoga classes have resumed at An Cridhe. There was a class on Monday and a class will take place today (Thursday) at 1.45pm. To register, email Rana at hello@ranawebster.co.uk or call/text 07770 847940.

Islay

ISLAY'S Gaelic Education and Cultural Heritage Centre will benefit from almost £100,000. The £97,000 provided by the Scottish Government's Gaelic Capital Fund will allow the centre to make upgrades to its early years and youth room and create new ancestry and heritage areas. The investment will also help develop Gaelic-enabled software and applications. 'We are committed to growing a new generation Gaelic speakers. Increasing access to Gaelic medium education is key to achieving that ambition,' said Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills, John Swinney. 'I am pleased to announce this funding, which will allow this successful and popular community hub to continue to flourish. It will bring educational and economic benefits to the area and help the centre meet the demand for Gaelic language and cultural education in Argyll and Bute.'



Benmore Botanic Garden.

Dunoon

BENMORE Botanic Garden, near Dunoon, has recorded its highest number of visitors in the last eight years. The opportunity to see new, unusual plants from around the world and fine weather during spring last year helped to attract more than 110,000 people to Benmore. Regius keeper Simon Milne said: 'More people than ever are choosing to visit us to learn about our living collection of plants, attend an event or exhibition or simply to relax in our gardens. It is terrific we are making a positive difference to people's daily lives by providing places of discovery and relaxation. We are always keen to share news about our science and conservation projects and remain thankful of the vital financial support we receive from visitors. This support comes through admissions, entry to our regional gardens, spending in our shops and restaurants or through membership and donations.'



Members of Ardochattan's Kirk Session and congregation with the Reverend Jeff McCormick. Back row: Robin Dodman, Aileen Binner, John Campbell, Andy Binner, Rev Jeff McCormick, Ken MacLeod, Donnie Campbell and Archie Buchanan. Front: Elliot Yates, Allison Davies, April Barron, Jane Eccles, Fiona McCormick, Anne MacLeod, Catherine Robb.

Farewell party for Ardochattan minister



Ann Campbell, centre, presented Mrs Fiona McCormick and Rev Jeff McCormick with Highland Stoneware gifts from the church and community.



Reverend Jeff McCormick with members of Victory Hall committee Margaret MacColl, Joy Cameron, Peter Weir, Jane Eccles and Elliot Yates.

A LARGE crowd gathered in North Connel Hall on Saturday January 13 for a celebration and farewell party for the Reverend Jeff McCormick who has served Ardochattan Parish since 1984. Several parishioners shared stories and memories of Jeff's time over the 33 years and a beautiful buffet was enjoyed before Jeff and his wife Fiona were presented with a Highland pottery dish and teapot which will be well used in the manse in Callendar to which they will be moving shortly. Jeff spoke affectionately of his time in service in Argyll and thanked everyone for the support he had received over the years. Members of the Victory Hall Committee in Benderloch also presented Jeff with a wooden quai and bottle of Oban whisky as a thank you for the many years of service he gave as chairman and secretary of The Victory Hall Committee.

Taynuilt

MUCKAIRN Church Guild met in the church on Monday January 8, with the session's theme 'Go in love'. The speaker was Ivy Blair, development co-ordinator of Prospects in Scotland, which helps adults with learning disabilities. The charity raises awareness among Christians of the needs of people with learning disabilities. It helps them find their strengths, understand things in church services and take part in them. The charity runs courses for speakers with learning disabilities, a holiday weekend, a retreat and a charity shop. A collection was made for this charity during Muckairn Guild's candlelight supper in December.

Western Isles

Pupils on FilmG awards shortlist

FOUR Western Isles schools have been shortlisted for the prestigious FilmG awards. Pupils from the Nicolson Institute, Castlebay School, Sgoil an Taobh Siar and Sgoil an Iochdair will all be in attendance. Pupils from The Nicolson Institute have been shortlisted in three categories. Their film Mèirleach nam Meeehs is shortlisted for The Best Film Award and FilmG's Gaelic Award and Gillian MacLean has also been shortlisted in the category for Best Actor/Actress. Castlebay Community School is also

shortlisted in FilmG's Gaelic Awards for their film Na Fiaclan Fireannach. In the primary school section, two schools have been successful: Sgoil an Iochdair with Creid Crogaidh and Sgoil an Taobh Siar with their take on Britain's Got Talent, Tàlant an Taobh Siar. It wasn't just island schools which were successful in reaching the final stages of the competition. A youth group from Fèis na Hearadh is on the shortlist for the Best Film Award for their film Ròs. Councillor Angus McCormack, chairman of education, sport and children's services at the Comhairle,

said: 'They have all done exceptionally well to reach this stage of the competition. This is further evidence of the praiseworthy work being done in our schools and in our communities. A lot of effort went into making the films and I wish every school, pupil and community group the very best of luck.' The awards ceremony will take place in Glasgow on Friday February 9 and all shortlisted schools and community groups will be represented at the event at the Old Fruitmarket. All this year's films can be viewed at www.filmg.co.uk.

Glenorchy and Innishail

GLENORCHY and Innishail Community Council met in Dalmally Community Centre on Wednesday January 10. Steve Beesley took the chair and welcomed everyone before the minutes of the November 8 meeting were approved. **Community police report:** PC Darren Miller presented his report of incidents over the past two months. A draft design for local Rural Watch Signs was noted. Informally, the secretary forwarded comments about three or four youths seen acting suspiciously in various places over the festive period. In answer to a question, Darren confirmed that to his knowledge there are no plans to close Dalmally Police Station. Darren encouraged residents to take care with domestic security and to report anything to police via 101 or 999 in an emergency. Only by reporting incidents at the time can anything meaningful be done. The chairman thanked Darren for his report. **Update from Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks (SSEN) on North Argyll Project:** Residents of Dalmally and Stronmilchan were present to hear a detailed and useful update, following public consultation in October 2017 on the proposed SSEN North Argyll Project which will include a connection from a new substation above Cladich to the Stronmilchan substation via Dalmally. In summary, the request that underground cables be used around the settlements has been taken on board and three routes have been identified, all presenting considerable challenges. The use of pylons and overhead lines are still on the table, as a more simple and cost effective solution, however, more detailed routes for these would be presented to the community at public consultation events and no lines will pass close to residential property. It was clear at the meeting local residents feel strongly they do not want more overhead lines, objections being visual impact in an area of outstanding natural beauty, safety issues, health issues and the feeling the opinions of Dalmally and district 'don't matter' to powerful utility companies. SSEN stressed it has an obligation to provide network connections to reinforce the existing network. There could be delays before a planning application is made. Because of this, consultation events scheduled for next week will be postponed. SSEN stressed that when these events do take place, along with more detailed information, it will be vital local residents respond and give as much feedback as possible, making their views count. The chairman thanked SSEN for its presentation. **A85:** There are still unresolved issues with drains and pavements on the A85 through Lochawe. **Bin collections:** Crisis management of this under-resourced service continues. **Glenorchy steps:** A new handrail has been fitted. **B840 timber transport:** Transport starts on April 2. Adverse comments about the condition of the B840 continue and these will be forwarded to Argyll and Bute Council, along with the report of a parapet strike on the east side of the Smiddy Bridge, Dalmally. There was praise, however, for improved winter road treatment. **Planning:** Eight planning applications were noted. The community council's objection to new signs at Dalmally Hotel were recorded. **Healthcare:** A resident praised NHS24 and Oban hospital for the care they had received over the festive period. **Date of next meeting:** Wednesday March 7, Bridge of Orchy, 7pm.

Loch Lomond

THE LODGE on Loch Lomond staff were busy in the lead up to Christmas, working alongside Bidfood to donate to six food banks across Greater Glasgow. The donations were worth just over £6,000. The Lodge on Loch Lomond started donating to food banks four years ago. As support for the hotel has grown, so too has the value of donations made. This year saw the largest donation to date and owner Niall Colquhoun has no plans of stopping. He said: 'We'd like to thank the guests that continually support the Lodge and Inn on Loch Lomond. We are fortunate to have so much. Donating food is a small way of helping people not so fortunate.' Allan McKie, business manager at Bidfood, said: 'Donating all of this stock to six food banks in Glasgow will have helped hundreds of families at what can be a difficult time of year. Speaking to the employees at the food banks when arranging delivery dates, I could tell how much these donations meant to them as all of the staff I spoke with were overwhelmed with the Lodge on Loch Lomond's generosity.'

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At Random

MARTIN LAING
 mlaing@obantimes.co.uk

My wish list for the year ahead

THERE is always much talk at this time about new year's resolutions and who makes them. I don't. However, I do have a wish list for the year ahead, though how much of it will be achieved remains in doubt. For what it's worth, here's what I'm hoping for in 2018.

Refuse collection:

I WOULD urge (as I have done on a number of occasions) Argyll and Bute Council to admit that the switch to a three-weekly domestic bins system simply doesn't work. Beleaguered residents of many parts of the area have had to suffer yet again for weeks as the council has failed to empty the bins. Rubbish has been piled up – and consequently strewn across our streets – as people have gone without refuse collection for weeks. This has led to genuine and heartfelt anger among many people who have endured failure after failure after failure since the 'new' system was introduced. Repeated promises from the council have turned out to be utterly fatuous. Yet the excuses go on. As reader John Kerr put it: 'It's the council's very bad decision that they refuse to reverse because they "know better" and don't want

to be seen to be perceived to be admitting "being wrong". Now I ask you, what is worse: admitting being wrong or continuing to be wrong knowing that you are wrong but not wanting to be seen to be admitting the fact?' Well said. It's past time this failed system was reversed.

Potholes:

ARGYLL has roads in some of the worst condition in the country, with a number of stretches now dangerous owing to the number of potholes and broken surfaces. The A85 is dangerous enough at the best of times but is now in a terrible condition, especially in places such as Connel. BEAR Scotland is the authority responsible for our trunk roads and it has said it 'monitoring var-

ious sections with teams working to carry out temporary repairs'. Never mind temporary repairs, BEAR Scotland must act urgently to resurface large swathes of our trunk roads. If you have concerns about our roads, report it to 0800 028 1414.

Live-streaming:

I'VE had a pop at Argyll and Bute councillors before about their mystifying refusal to have meetings live-streamed so that we, the public they are supposed to represent, can watch them online. As regular readers will know, the equipment is all there already so I am at a complete loss to understand their reasons for refusing to let us see what they are up to. Cynics might suspect these people, who are well paid from

the public purse, have something to hide. Let's hope 2018 brings a dawning of common sense so they realise we are absolutely entitled to view their shenanigans.

Success for Saints:

OBAN Saints have made it to the semi-finals of the Scottish Amateur Cup for the past two seasons. That has been a considerable achievement and the club deserves the highest praise for doing so well. And this season has seen them on another good cup run, with Saints now in the fifth round. Let's hope 2018 sees them go one better and make it through to the final at Hampden Park.

Andy Murray:

FINALLY, and with a nod to my colleague Lesley McKerracher, who may be his biggest fan, wouldn't it be great to see Andy Murray back playing competitive tennis this year? Whether or not he can emulate the great success he has already achieved in his career remains in question, but he is a bonny fechter and I'd love to see him gain it lally on the world's best courts.

What do you think?

WRITE to me at mlaing@obantimes.co.uk or The Oban Times, Crannog Lane, Oban, PA34 4 HB.

Rubbish is strewn about the road in Colonsay Terrace, Oban.

Event puts railway history on the line

JAMIE YATES
editor@obantimes.co.uk

THE Heritage Lottery-funded Journeys to the Little Bay project at the Rockfield Centre will draw to a close over the next few weeks with a series of events.

Up next is *The Oban Line: A Railway Celebration*, an exhibition of the town's train station and rail links.

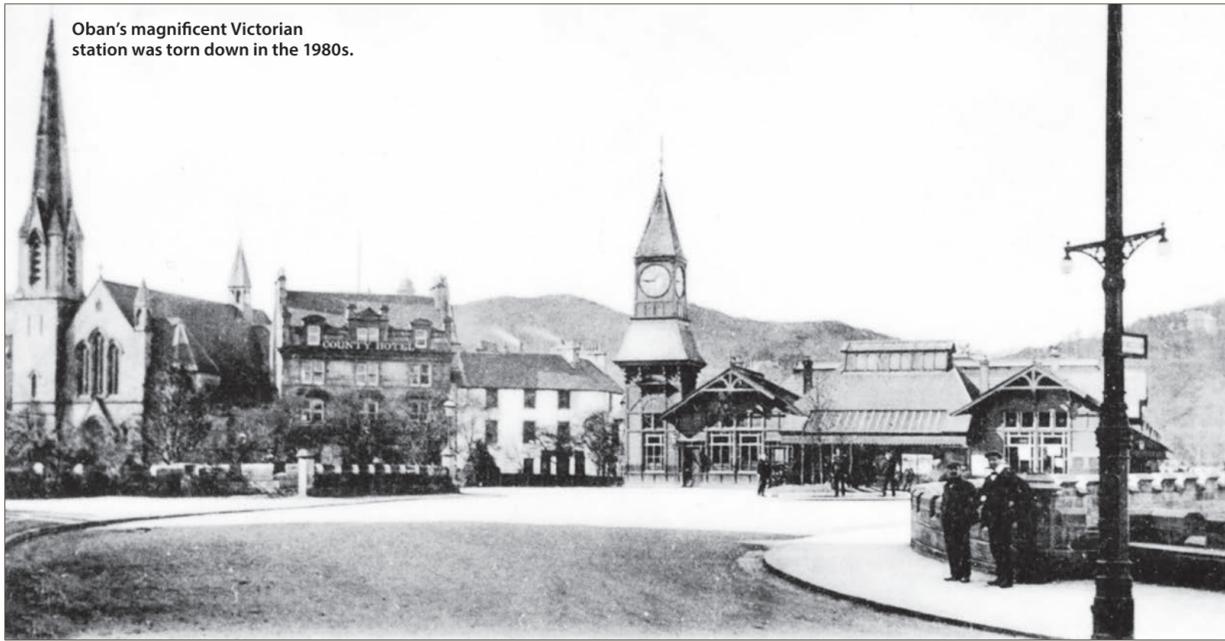
Talking to locals of a certain vintage, it quickly becomes clear just how much a way of life the railway in and around Oban was in its heyday.

The injustice of the Beeching cuts in the 1960s and insensitivity to the people impacted by them through job losses and removal of that physical and emotional connection remains fresh for many today.

The branch line system was savagely cut, generations of families steeped in railway tradition left to mourn a life they loved. The line through Argyll to Oban, over Connel Bridge to Ballachulish, through Benderloch, Appin and other stops en route, each with their own wee communities built around them, was ripped out. Stations and signal boxes were left to crumble.

When the beautiful Victorian station at Oban – a listed building – was torn down in 1986, it represented the final act of a golden era. The resonance that must have reverberated around that antique structure was wiped out in the name of 'progress'.

At the Rockfield Centre, we hope to recapture a little of the magic of



Oban's magnificent Victorian station was torn down in the 1980s.

those glory days, starting with our monthly Bletcher tomorrow (Friday January 19, 2pm at the Rockfield). Come and share your railway recollections over a cuppa; memories of family and friends, mishaps and pranks.

It is another world but one we hope we can bring to life through

storytelling, sharing of pictures and cuttings. Have a root around and bring anything you have.

This weekend, we will be hosting an exhibition of all the artefacts we have collected.

For the railway connoisseur, heritage volunteer Sandy Smart has assembled a mouthwatering array

of memorabilia and detail about the line in liaison with some of Oban railway's finest.

The characters we have learned so much about through the recordings we have made will be celebrated and the exhibition dedicated to the memory of all the men and women who worked so hard to make the railway

very much the heartbeat of the area.

We are particularly keen to welcome as many current and former Oban line railway staff and families of those no longer with us ... they are railway royalty – every one of them.

In October, I had the great fortune to take a call from a gentleman by the name of Hector MacColl. Hector

came from thoroughbred railway stock on the Ballachulish branch and worked as a clerk at Benderloch and Oban in the 1950s.

Sandy and I interviewed him at Hallowe'en last year and were heartbroken to discover recently that he had died and would never have the chance to listen to the captivating 45-minute recording he so enthusiastically provided. His recall was magnificent and he spoke so fondly of his railway days.

It was a pleasure to sit and listen to him and has been an honour to share this remarkable piece of oral history with his family and friends. He would have been a star at the Oban Line events and we will commemorate him accordingly.

As part of the exhibition, we will also be providing a visitors' book to record as many names as we can of folk who worked on the railway or at any of the stations around about the Oban area in any capacity. There is also to be a hall of fame archive to ensure all of these remarkable people are never forgotten.

Entry to all events is free of charge. A collection for Argyll Beats Cardiovascular Disease (www.abcd-oban.co.uk) will be taken in fond memory of our dear friend Hector MacColl.

The Oban Line – A Railway Celebration, Friday to Sunday, January 19 to 21, the Rockfield Centre, Stevenson Street, Oban.

Jamie Yates is heritage officer for the Rockfield Centre.



Far left: Appin had its own railway station until the Beeching cuts in the 1960s. Centre: Oban station was much different from today. Left: Many people have fond memories of the former Oban station.

New illustrated book is a genuine blessing

MORVERN LINES
IAIN THORNER
editor@obantimes.co.uk

IT IS probably true to say that there are fewer homes these days where grace is said before meals than ever before, which is a very good reason why they should be gathered together for posterity.

Catriona Monro, who lives in Arisaig and is a daughter of the manse, has recently published a lovely little book called *We'll say the Blessing* containing a witty and amusing selection of graces.

Her father, the Reverend Ronald Torrie, was Church of Scotland minister of several parishes ranging from Kilchoman and Bruichladdich on Islay to Birnie and Pluscarden in Morayshire with Gibraltar in between.

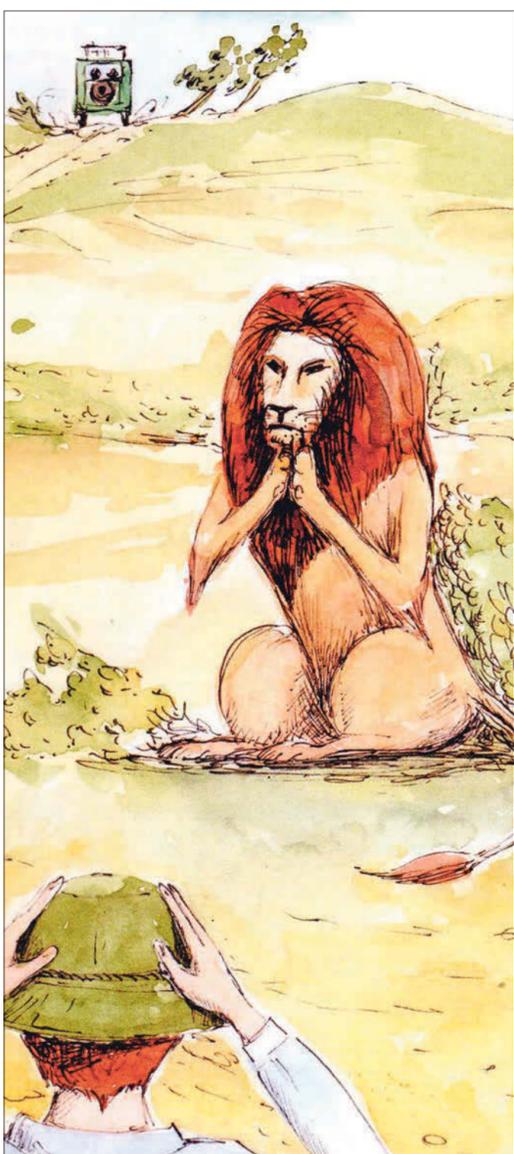
Catriona writes: 'As children of the manse, saying grace before or after a meal was as routine as washing our hands.'

When her father died in 1996, her mother, whose sister was the first woman ordained as an elder in the history of the Church of Scotland, started a book in which she recorded Ronald's graces, adding new ones as they came her way, and which now form the bulk of this fascinating collection.

The writer sets the scene with the story of a famous atheist who went on safari but fell out of the Land Rover he was travelling in. As it disappeared, a lion arrived and began licking its lips. The atheist, realising this was not the moment to stick to his principals, began to pray aloud. 'Dear Lord, if you're there, will you save me from this beast and I'll become a Christian?'

A booming voice answered: 'Of course I'm here, but as you have spent your life denying my existence, why should I save you now?'

'Fair enough,' said the atheist, 'but if you won't make me a Christian, will you at least



A Christian Lion, sketched by Miranda Maclean, Ardour.

am about to receive, may I be truly thankful.'

One of my favourites is the North American native Indian chief's grace: 'When you arise in the morning, give thanks for the morning light. Give thanks for your life and strength; give thanks for your food, and give thanks for the sheer joy of living and, if perchance you see no reason for giving thanks, rest assured that the fault is in yourself.'

Then there is the unexpected: 'Bless these sinners at their dinners; 'For scrambled eggs on buttered toast, thank Father, Son and Holy Ghost; 'Hey, God, be a dude, come down here and bless this food.'

Or what about The Accountants' Grace: 'Lord, as the frosts begin to bite, and we suffer economic rigours, we thank you for CAs who read and understand the figures. Lord bless this food, bless this house and all our guests protect and, if it pleases you, Lord, this year keep our accounts correct.'

And, finally: 'May the best ye've ever seen, be the worst ye'll ever see, may a moose [mouse] may leave yer girdel wi' a tear drap in its een, may yer lum keep blithely reeking 'til ye're auld enough to dee, may ye aye be jist as happy as I'd like ye a' tae be.'

If you are looking for a special post Christmas thank you present or an interesting birthday gift, this is ideal. It is charmingly written and nicely illustrated by Catriona's family and modestly priced at £8.50 with a bit extra for postage.

It is available at Yeadons Bookshop, Elgin; Pluscarden Abbey; Logie Steading near Forres; Bookmark in Granton on Spey; Spey Larder, Aberdeen; Land, Sea and Island Centre, Arisaig; or direct from the author – catrionamonro@gmail.com

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The Oban Times

& WEST HIGHLAND TIMES

There has been a long-standing campaign by activists against salmon and sea trout farming in Argyll and the Highlands and Islands. The problem they have is with sea lice, which, they say, are causing devastation among the wild salmon populations.

So it comes as little surprise that the campaigners have welcomed a report from the Norwegian Institute of Nature Studies which examines all research on the impact of sea lice from salmon farms.

The scientists concluded the combined results from more than 100 scientific studies provided evidence of

a 'general and pervasive negative effect' of sea lice on salmon and sea trout populations in intensively farmed areas of Ireland, Norway and Scotland.

That is a cause of genuine concern for all of us, including those running fish farms. The industry, however, is an important one for the Scottish economy, perhaps especially on the West Coast, where it employs many people.

The Scottish Government is to hold an inquiry into the issue this year. We hope it can come up with workable solutions to a crucial sector.



Days gone by – 1938

This picture was dropped into us by Gordon Clark, who is from Fort William but has Oban and Argyll family connections. He was struggling to identify the people and asks readers for their help. It is a crowd scene from the 1938 Camanachd Cup final in Oban which was played between Oban Camanachd and Inverness. Oban won the match 4-2.

MacPhail

ANGUS MACPHAIL
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PARTY political opinion and comment is certainly not a course that this column will be swinging its bow towards in the near future and the following is not an endorsement or judgement of the main subject's party, stance within that party, past triumphs and failures, or present opinions and current campaigns.

I am, however, and have been for a long time a fan of his writing, clarity of message in both speech and debate, and his commitment to the various paths he has followed throughout his career.

Alastair Campbell has been one of the most significant figures in British politics of recent years and, although no longer at the heart of the Labour Party, he was one of the masterminds, architects, builders and commanders of New Labour – a title which, in fact, he coined – throughout its period of dominance in UK politics which lasted nearly 15 years.

Social media

There was an immediate and furious response from readers to our story about the refuse collection 'disgrace' over the festive period, which saw rubbish piling up all over the Oban area.

Kate McNab: 'When are the council going to admit they have made a huge error in reducing bin uplift as now they are running weeks behind schedule with no one knowing if or when bins will be emptied.... and are they going to fix the rat problem they are creating all over the district.... Will be looking great for the tourist season over flowing bins and over run by rats.'

Rachel Paterson: 'It is disgusting!!! I live in dalintart drive, my blue bins which are full have been out since last week waiting to be emptied, I have x2 green bins which are full due to Christmas and having a newborn

Alastair, whose father came from Cornaigbeg on Tiree, and I have met briefly on various occasions over the years but recently I had the chance to spend a longer time in his company at a small private gig on New Year's Day and the impact of that did not disappoint.

This was probably the smallest gig we have done for many years but it created one of the biggest impressions on me. There were various circumstances relating to a number of those present that gave the gathering a poignant air, but through that background of sadness, there was a strong atmosphere of love, celebration and fun.

The positive vibes generated by a small and varied group like that does not happen without significant raw ingredients in those present – talent, intellect, kindness, humility, humour, energy, ambition, empathy and all round good humanity are among the many.

The poem Run the Race that I dedicated to Murdo MacLeod in last week's piece, I looked for in my laptop when I got back to Fort William that

very night. I wrote it about 15 years ago and hadn't seen it for a long time.

For the same reasons that reading the poem brought Murdo straight to mind, the effect created by that small gathering resonated with the wavelength of the words and epitomised what I was attempting to convey through the verses.

Like Murdo, Alastair Campbell has run many races throughout his life. On the way, he has had his rises, falls and re-risings, and that richness of experience can be felt clearly in his presence. There are infinite directions from which to choose in life and far be it from me to pontificate on which are worthy or not, but there is a definite wisdom and depth that is exuded by those who are not afraid to plough their own furrow and do so with vigour and determination.

Be it as a builder, a politician, a school teacher, a bin man, a musician, an academic, a mother, a father, farmer, a fisherman or a feather-bed maker, those who choose their race in life and run it with conviction are inspiring.



Karen Anderson: 'The council should be ashamed!!! Bins along Glencruitten Road still not emptied almost a week late. Shocking. Oban looks a mess just now. It needs a huge clean-up!'

Louise Maxwell: 'Went to Moliagh with blue bin ourselves were told no room so just throw the recycling in general rubbish?'

Hamish Kirk: 'Clelland Sneddon the CEO must shoulder much of the blame.'

Daniel Coleman: 'So we're paying council tax for??'

Stephen Cargill: 'Council are Mince.'

John B MacDonald: 'What a horrific sight.'

Paul Graham: 'Contacted A&B council today to ask when the blue bins would be picked up (should have been picked up on the 5th) told they would not be picked up for another two weeks.'

Cynthia Carswell: 'Think it is disgusting.'

let us know as soon as possible by any of the three methods: emailing editor@obantimes.co.uk; telephoning the editor on 01631 568046; writing to the Editor at The Oban Times, Crannog Lane, Lochavullin estate, Oban, PA34 4HB.

We will attempt to resolve your issue in a timeous, reasonable and amicable manner. However, if you are unsatisfied with

our response, you can contact IPSO, which will investigate the matter. You can either telephone IPSO on 0300 123 2220 or email inquiries@ipso.co.uk. IPSO is an independent body which deals with complaints from the public about the editorial content of newspapers and magazines.

We will abide by the decision of IPSO.



Argyll roads have never been so bad

Sir,
With more than 40 years' driving experience on Argyll roads on a weekly basis, I can state confidently that I have never seen the roads in Oban and our major trunk routes in such appalling condition.

Potholes and other broken surfaces litter our roads.

Only a few days ago I drove out from Oban to Crianlarich in daylight. Travelling at between 45mph and 60mph, one had little time to take evasive action with regard to the many potholes.

It is bad enough, and at the very least inconvenient, having to avoid this cratered road landscape in the confines of the town under a 30mph speed limit. Damaged tyres, wheel rims and shock absorbers are the likely victims (and at not inconsiderable cost).

However, once this scenario is transferred to the trunk roads, where traffic is travelling at up to double town speed maximum, this becomes a real hazard to the safety of all motorists and other road users. Do we have to wait until the first fatality is caused by poor road surfaces before the roads authorities take action?

It was bad enough driving to Tyndrum in daylight but returning along this same road in the dark had obvious risks as the potholes are virtually hidden, especially having to drive with dipped headlights or in heavy rain. A high speed impact could be catastrophic not only for the car and driver involved but potentially for other road users close by.

As for motor bikes, I shudder to think of the results of a high speed impact with a pothole on two wheels.

Argyll and Bute Council along with BEAR Scotland (which, I understand, is responsible for maintaining the trunk roads) must urgently get their act together.

I am aware that public expenditure has been cut on roads infrastructure and now we are paying for it dearly. However, money cannot come before public safety.

Many people are airing this issue in daily conversations or on Facebook. That is all very well but we have to raise our game and bring it to the attention of those whose responsibility it is to maintain our roads.

I would therefore urge all road users to contact their councillor, MP or MSP to make their views on this subject known.

Rob MacCallum,
by email.

Gaelic will be left without its soul

Sir,
I write with regard to a report I heard recently on Radio nan Gàidheal in which David Boag, head of Bord na Gàidhlig, was talking (in English) about Gaelic and its uses or abuses.

As a born and bred Gaelic speaker, I have to say that both Mr Boag's spoken Gaelic and English were really bad.

When we were in school, we were

Beachd Ailein

ALLAN CAMPBELL
ailean@obantimes.co.uk



CHAN IONGNADH sam bith gu bhèil dealachadh Bhreatainn bhon Aonadh Eòrpach am measg prìomh naidheachdan na dùthcha a-rithist, agus gu cinnteach leanaidh sin fiù 's seachad air ceann-latha oifigeil an dealachaidh air 29 den Mhàrt an-ath-bhlaidhna.

Tha sin iomchaidh oir chan eil teagamh nach e seo ceum cho cudromach 's a tha an dùthach seo air a ghabhail bho chionn ùine mhòr, agus ceum a dh'fhoadadh buaidh leantainneach a thoirt air beatha agus teachd-an-tìr a' mhòr-shluaigh againn. Chan eil mise dol gar claidh an-dràsta leis na h-argamaidean àbhaisteach ach tha mi airson cuspair a thogail a thàinig thugam is mi ag èisteachd bho chionn ghoirid ri naidheachd mu chasaidean braidheanais. Gu mì-fhortanach tha tràillealachd fhathast a' gabhail àite feadh an t-saoghail. 'S e nàrachadh a th' ann gu bhèil sin a' tachairt san dùthach seo cuideachd bho àm gu àm agus far an tèid a leithid a dhearbhadh tha e ceart agus iomchaidh sin a pheanasachadh.

Bha mi a' smaoineachadh air mar a bha na Gàidheil fad linntean an eisimeil dìon agus taic chinn-cinnidh agus na

taught in English but our Gaelic was very good, dramatically and orally, as was our English. I now come across people who cannot speak either very well.

Are we going to end up with a mongrel Gaelic community, and a language and culture without a soul? I believe we are well on the way already.

In the future, there will be very few if any proper speakers of Gaelic because, when its speakers are not brought up within its culture, it becomes a mongrel language. How can this be allowed – and with government money too?

Angus Campbell,
Garrynamonie, South Uist.

Islay doctor should stay with the NHS

Sir,
I've just read Dr Kate Pickering's letter pinned up in the Port Charlotte Medical Centre that she is migrating to Australia, which gained independence from Britain in 1901.

It was only recently that Dr Pickering stood before the Islay community during the Scottish referendum as a guest speaker arguing for a 'no thanks' vote in a packed Bowmore village hall, expecting people to listen to her and, I am sure, in her position as the clinical lead, would have influenced people to vote No.

The *leach*, the community-owned newspaper, sponsored the referendum debate in Bowmore hall and in its next edition reported on the front page: 'Dr Kate Pickering had a more spontaneous approach – she espoused the view that independence would be dangerous, plucking examples from her professional and family life.'

Scotland's biggest export is our people and I would have expected Dr Pickering to have stayed and make the union work since she won the Better Together vote. Our NHS needs all our professionals.

Colin M Campbell,
Port Charlotte, Isle of Islay.

Salmon farms cause a sea lice soup

Sir,
Iain Jenner from Lochaber is absolutely correct to highlight the downside of salmon farming and its impact on our wild salmonids and marine environment.

The tragedy of the Awe/Orchy is typical of the unintended consequences of salmon farming.

I grew up in Glenuig and was lucky enough to fish the Moidart and Ailort fisheries. I remember looking in awe at a 16lb sea trout caught on the Moidart, only to be told that an 18lb sea trout had been caught on Loch Eilt that very day!

Today salmon and sea trout are as good as extinct on these waters, along with another 300 rivers and lochs on Scotland's west coast.

The hundreds of jobs these fish supported as ghillies and in the service

sector have gone also. The culprit is undoubtedly sea lice generated in their millions by salmon farms causing a coastal sea lice soup that kills migrating smolts once they have left their natal rivers.

Salmon farms are usually located in the cheap, discreet locations of our sea lochs. It would not be difficult to locate them on land where the effluent could be treated and sea lice larvae destroyed with UV light. The cost of this would be mitigated by not having to spend a great deal of money on political lobbyists paid to generate propaganda intended to dupe both government and the public.

What has happened to Scotland's west coast salmonid fisheries is verging on criminal and the big east coast rivers are not immune as their smolts have to pass the lice-infested farms in Orkney and Shetland. This would go a long way toward explaining the increase in marine mortality since the 1970s.

Michael C Smith
Cleish, Kinross.

Dogged campaigner will be sadly missed

Sir,
On a chance encounter in Oban last Thursday I was saddened to learn of the death of my friend and former neighbour George Doyle, from Seil Island.

I took your paper home as usual and found George's letter and I think there can be hardly be a more fitting tribute to the man himself.

With his quiet determination and indomitable spirit, George was a man who commanded respect and who would not lie down in the face of adversity but tackle it head on, regardless of what bureaucracy or the establishment threw at him and all with that beautiful, gentle underlying humour.

He will be sadly missed.
Jim MacKay,
Lianag, Barcaldine.

Perpetuating a myth of the Clearances

Sir,
I object strongly to the use of the word 'Saxon' in the poem by Michael G Kidd printed in *The Oban Times* (Letters, January 11).

By the time of the clearances in Scotland, the word Saxon would have long been forgotten.

The shepherds of the time would have invariably been Scots. Mr Kidd should re-read his history. The myth is that all these people were forcibly removed; the reality is that many Scots saw the Americas and elsewhere as a chance to improve their lives. It is the same reason that saw many Irish, Welsh and English migrating to Scotland and America.

The proof is that their descendants do not bear any grudge against anyone in the present UK. Racism is a nasty trait in Scotland.

Cyril Bonnett,
Ballachulish.

Ailean Caimbeul

bhuannachd a bu mhotha, agus a chuir ri beartas Ghàidheil agus eile. Bidh mi a' smaoineachadh air sin nuair bhios mi ag èisteachd ri argamaidean a thaobh cho deatamach 's a tha e saorsa a bhith aig luchd-còmhnaidh dhùthchannan Eòrpach sibhal an seo agus na h-obraichean "nach eil duine an seo ag iarraidh" a ghabhail. Saoil am bheil gnothaich aig ire tuarastail ris an t-suidheachadh?

AT THE END of the 19th century, and into the early 20th century, some crofters were still required to give their landlord many days of unpaid spring and harvest-time labour in addition to their rent.

Although shameful, it was maybe not surprising that some emigrant Gaels achieved success and wealth through using slave labour in their new lives overseas. Cheap labour continues to be attractive, and one must wonder how much wage levels influence issues of EU workers filling UK jobs that 'no-one here wants'.

Ailean Caimbeul (Allan Campbell)
ailean@obantimes.co.uk

Your letters

THE EDITOR welcomes letters of approximately 300 words in length for publication on this page.

The editor also reserves the right to shorten, to amend or to refuse to print them. Names and postal addresses must be supplied, including on emails, to indicate good faith.

A daytime telephone number

is also required for verification. Anonymous letters or those supplied without a contact telephone number will not be printed.

Please write or fax to: Letters page, The Oban Times, PO Box 1, Oban, Argyll, PA34 4HB. Fax: 01631 568001. Email editor@obantimes.co.uk.

WE AT The Oban Times endeavour to ensure that all our reports are fair and accurate and comply with the Editors' Code of Practice set by the Independent Press Standards Organisation (IPSO). We realise, however, that mistakes happen from time to time.

If you think we have made a significant mistake and you wish to discuss this with us, please



Win tickets to the Caravan Show



SCOTLAND'S largest exhibition is making its welcome return to Glasgow from February 8 to 11.

The Scottish Caravan, Motorhome and Holiday Home Show, which is once again sponsored by one of Scotland's leading motorhome dealers, BC Motorhomes, will take over the entire SEC in Glasgow for another year to welcome more than 200 exhibitors and outdoor experts across the four-day period.

And to celebrate the return of the much loved exhibition, we've teamed up with the show to offer readers the chance to win a pair of tickets to the ultimate outdoor extravaganza.

With the exhibition set to be bigger than ever in 2018 with an even larger family camping area, more accessories and hundreds of models, layouts

and specifications all in one place, it's the perfect destination to find out more about holidaying at home.

Visitors to the show will be able to have first sightings of the brand new models for 2018 as well as a variety of holiday homes from luxury lodges to eco pods.

With brands including Airstream, Swift, Elddis, Lunar, Bailey, Coachman, Roller Team and Rapido, there is guaranteed to be something to suit all needs and budgets.



Back by popular demand, visitors will also be able to purchase the 'must have' tents and accessories for their outdoor adventures at the Accessory Superstore.

Also on show will be marine products including jet skis and dinghies, as well as other marine accessories.

If that wasn't enough, visitors will be able to wander through the Holiday Park Village where staff will be on hand to provide

advice and offer suggestions to make sure their caravanning experience is the best it can be.

In addition, a number of clubs and associations will be there to help you pick out your next destination, while free caravan towing or motorcaravan manoeuvring sessions are on offer from the Caravan and Motorhome Club.

Tickets on sale now. Book yours and find out more about this year's exhibition at www.caravanshowscotland.com

To be in with a chance of winning the tickets, simply answer the following question: What dates is the Scottish Caravan, Motorhome and Holiday Home Show on?

Send your answer to Scottish Caravan Show competition, The Oban Times, Crannog Lane, Oban, PS34 4HB.

Terms and conditions.

This competition is open to all adults over 18. All entries must include the name and contact details of the entrant. Entries will not be considered if they do not have all information specified.

Winners will be chosen at random and the editor's decision is final. The prize is one pair of tickets to the Scottish Caravan, Motorhome and Holiday Home Show 2018. Prize is valid for one day entry only and can be used on any one day between Thursday February 8 and Sunday February 11, 2018.

This prize has no cash alternative, is non-refundable and non-exchangeable. Travel and parking are not included. Please note that you must provide a full driving licence to participate in the free towing and manoeuvring sessions.

Choosing a nursery?

Registration week for free early learning and childcare is coming up in March. Here are some things worth considering when choosing a nursery.

Speak to your friends, relatives, colleagues and look in local press. These are generally trusted sources for recommendations.

See what The Care Inspectorate, independent regulators of care services in Scotland, says about local facilities. Their website www.careinspectorate.com allows you to search all the services in a town or postcode area. You'll find:

- Service and provider details - who, what and where.
- Conditions of Registration - opening times and maximum number of children cared for.
- Quality Grades - see how a service is performing. Care Inspectors during unannounced visits look at four themes, care and support, environment, staffing, leadership and management.
- Inspections - full inspection reports are available.
- Complaints / Enforcements

- * The aim of the nursery
- * Background on the nursery
- * Opening times
- * Numbers of children cared for
- * Inspection grades
- * How they will involve you and your child in the service
- * Information on Pre-Birth to Three / Curriculum for Excellence (Scottish Government policy)
- * A typical day at the nursery
- * Fees and payment terms

You will want to visit possible nurseries. Do not be afraid to take a list of questions on your visit. Similar to viewing a house, you should get a feel about the nursery as soon as you walk in.

Things to consider:

- * Is the entrance safe and secure?
- * Is the entrance area welcoming, with displays of children's work, parent notice boards and staff photographs.
- * Are you asked to sign in? The member of staff who shows you around should be knowledgeable and put you at ease.

As part of your visit, you should expect:

- * To view all playrooms, regardless

of the age of your child.

- * To be welcomed by all staff as you enter playrooms and a nice touch is when staff speak to your child, showing their genuine interest.

- * Playrooms to be calm, but not quiet - children should be engaged in a variety of learning opportunities including imaginative play, arts and crafts and physical play.

- * To view evidence of children's involvement such as art work and photographs.

- * The nursery and all resources to be visibly clean.

- * To be shown children's toilets, nappy changing areas and outdoor play areas - again these should be clean.

- * To speak to a member of the management team.

- * To see evidence of the curriculum in practice - planning and information documents displayed.

Argyll & Bute Council: Children born between March 1, 2015 and February 29, 2016 are eligible for free Early Learning and Childcare from August 2018. Registration week will take place week beginning Monday March 5, 2018.

Information leaflets will be available from early learning and childcare

providers at the time of registration and parents can obtain further guidance from the Early Years helpline (01369 708503), Argyll and Bute Council, Argyll House, Alexandra Parade, Dunoon, PA23 8AJ

Highland Council: Children born between March 1, 2014 and February 29, 2016 are entitled to a funded Early Learning and Childcare place from August 21, 2018.

For Early Learning and Childcare places enrolment week will be Monday, February 12 to Friday, February 16, 2018. Please contact Highland Council on 01349 886606.



Oban's 1st Steps Day Nursery

A place to learn, play and imagine

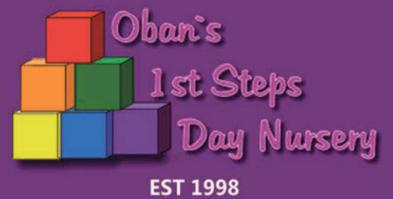
1st Steps nursery is a safe, happy, caring and stimulating environment, where all the staff want the best for the children and parents.

It has been described as a 'little paradise' where every detail has been thought about to make sure every child has the best possible start in life. In our loving, caring environment, our children are listened to, respected and valued.

At 1st Steps we believe that the chance to learn is all around us and every child should grow in their own unique way exploring their own abilities without limitations and that is why our indoor and outdoor learning environments are specially designed to inspire.

In the established mature garden children can play, be active and grow their own plants, fruit and vegetables. Children are then able to prepare some of their own produce and taste it.

1st Steps Nursery is committed to providing nutritious healthy meals for children in a setting that allows them to share meal times together, including breakfast, lunch and tea daily.



Open 8am till 6pm, Monday - Friday
All bank & public holidays excluding xmas and new year

Children are cared for in their own age groups from 3 months to 5 years

If your child is born between the 1/3/15 and 29/02/16 they are eligible for free childcare sessions.

We offer AM and PM sessions for ELCC including wrap around and cooked lunch.

Please feel free to drop in and discuss your child's needs

OPEN DAYS:
Registration Week for ELCC 2018/19 will take place 5th March 9am to 3pm



Croft Road, Oban, Argyll, PA34 5JL

Tel: 01631 567491

www.firststepsoban.co.uk



To find out more and take a look for yourself come to our OPEN DAY February 3rd (Fort William) from 10-2

Open Days coming soon in February/March for Oban

Exciting outdoor activity programme for children & young people aged 3 to 16 years old.

Activities available Monday to Friday from 8.30am to 5.30pm

Stramash Outdoor Nursery Open 50 weeks a year!

Visit www.stramash.org.uk for more details,

or call 01631 566080, or email info@stramash.org.uk

TEL: 01631 566080 www.stramash.org.uk

Stramash Outdoor Nursery

Stramash Social Enterprise delivers high quality learning opportunities through the outdoors across three nursery sites and an adventurous schools programme. Based in Oban, Fort William and Elgin we work closely with children, parents, staff and communities to provide experiences for children and young people that inspire creativity, development and stewardship of the natural world. With Ben Nevis and Inverloch Castle as its backdrop our Fort William nursery is an ever changing and engaging space. Our Oban nursery is located on a clifftop at Ganavan with stunning views over to Lismore and Mull. Specially designed to promote, intrigue and wonder whilst providing warmth and shelter when it's needed. Our staff are qualified, motivated, and friendly and are passionate about children's rights and interests. They support children to make their own decisions and discoveries, follow their passions in a nurturing environment while ensuring that they are prepared to thrive in our world outdoors. With Stramash you can make your family part of something amazing.



For more information please call 01631 566 080 or email info@stramash.org.uk.

Arena

> radio and what's on listings > leisure ideas > local events

WHAT'S ON IN OBAN

In partnership with Oban Town Diary
bid4oban.co.uk



Thursday

18th January

Winter Warmers Information Session
Argyll College
10.30am-11.30am

Netherlorn Piping Society Recital

Argyllshire Gathering Halls
7.30pm
Adults £3 - children free

Gaelic Drama Workshop

Furan Gaelic Centre
7pm-8.30pm

Oban High School Dance Show

Corran Halls
Matinee 12.15 pm
Evening 7.30 pm

Friday

19th January

The Legends of American Country Tribute Show
Corran Halls, Oban
Show Starts at 7.30pm

Live Music & Entertainment @ Markie Dans

Lazy Jams
Music Starts at 9.30pm
Open till 1am

Monthly Bletcher/Railway Special

Rockfield Centre
12pm-4pm
Admission: £6

Saturday

20th January

Cearcall Còmhraidh (Gaelic Conversation Group)
Furan Gaelic Centre,
12pm-1.30pm

Railway Exhibition

Rockfield Centre
12pm-4pm

Live Music & Entertainment @ Markie Dans

The Calum MacPhail Band
Music Starts at 10pm open until 2 am

Sunday

21st January

Live Music & Entertainment @ Markie Dans QUIZ NIGHT at 9.30pm
£1 per person, max of 6 per team
Win £20 bar voucher
Watch out for the £100 cash prize accumulator

Railway Exhibition

Rockfield Centre
12pm-4pm

Dr Harris - Viking Burial - Ardnamurchan

St Columba's Cathedral Hall
7.30pm-9pm

Week of Prayer For Christian Unity Service

Corran Halls
11am-12noon

Monday

22nd January

Oban Photographic Club Meeting
Regent Hotel
7.15 pm - 9.30 pm

Tuesday

23rd January

Irish Dancing Classes
St Columba's Cathedral Hall
4.15pm-5.45pm

Wednesday

24th January

Under The Skin Camera Club
Rockfield Centre
6.30pm-7.30pm

Exhibition highlights Mallaig school pupils as they turn 50

A MALLAIG man has travelled more than 3,000 miles to photograph his former classmates, who turn 50 this year.

Ex-photojournalist Donald Maclellan pictured the 24 'boys and girls' to mark their progress from their school days in a project entitled My Class @ 50. They are the people with whom he spent his formative school days (1979-83) in the Lochaber port village of Mallaig.

The focus of the project observes the former classmates and Mr Maclellan in their 2017 workplaces, which range from train driver to seaman, fisherman, shepherdess and teacher.

Mr Maclellan will be debuting his portrait show at the Mallaig Heritage Centre in the village where it all started.

Mr Maclellan said: 'This project is about ordinary people and their place in their world.'

'My belief is that everyone can identify with the experiences of rubbing shoulders with children at school, thrown together for that intense learning period purely due to an accident of birth. Those relationships and life lessons affect the rest of our lives, yet we each pursue such diverse paths and destinies.'

Mr Maclellan was born in 1967 and raised in the West Highlands. He studied photography at Salisbury College of Art and spent several years assisting established photographers before

setting up as a freelance photographer for national newspapers and magazines.

The project has grown into an extraordinarily honest snapshot of social change, reflecting the demise of Scottish traditional industries, such as fishing, and the shift into the service sector and tourism, replacing and creating unprecedented options for the region's populace.

He added: 'My initial inspiration came from coming across my 1980 secondary form photograph on show in Mallaig Heritage Centre. The project then developed based on what we told the careers officer before we left school and the choices we have each made since - what we've achieved and how we earn a living.'

'I feel a protective and proud responsibility with this photographic record.

These profiles of the achievements and contributions of my classmates are, unlike my previous key work, not about power and influence but about opportunities and choices in modern British society. It's important to celebrate all work and its diversity.'

Accompanying and amplifying each portrait are the subjects' answers to questions that Mr Maclellan has posed about their early hopes and career choices. These personal stories offer a fascinating cross-section of contemporary life in Scotland and beyond.

The exhibition will include online and printed publications, plus a programme of preview and post-opening interviews and talks.

My Class @ 50 runs from April 2 to September 30 at Mallaig Heritage Centre, Station Road, Mallaig.



Mallaig Secondary School Class of 1980.



Robert Summers is now a fishing boat skipper.



Fiona Bark is now a shepherdess.

Events may charge. Please visit www.obanwhatson.co.uk for more details.

To list your event, please call 01631 568000

The Oban Times supports local charities and not-for-profit event organisers.

Let us know about your forthcoming event to appear for free in our listings, in association with Oban Town Diary.

We have reduced our community noticeboard box adverts to just £10 plus VAT (where VAT is applicable)

Put your event in front of 25,000 readers and also see what we can offer you by promoting your event online - we have over 11,000 followers on Facebook and 36'000 monthly visitors to www.obantimes.co.uk

It pay to advertise with The Oban Times - first for community news, business news and events throughout Oban, Lochaber and the West Highlands.

Contact Nadine or Rhona on 01631 568000



Glasgow Letter

ROBERT ROBERTSON

robert.d.robertson@hotmail.co.uk



Film G Awards

Friday February 9 will be the evening of the 10th annual Film G Awards - the night when the Gaelic community don their glad rags and descend upon the Old Fruitmarket to celebrate Gaelic film-makers and cheer the nominees and winners of all the categories across all ages.

The competition began in 2008 with the intention of recruiting up and coming talent for BBC Alba.

Since then, the competition has received more than 400 entries and many of the competitors have gone on to have successful careers in Gaelic media. This year highlights will be shown on BBC Alba for the first time. Good luck to all the competitors.

Clydebank cèilidhs return for 2018

The first Clydebank cèilidh of 2018 got off to a great start with two of the association's

members celebrating birthdays.

Katie MacDonald turned 90 on December 20 and her good friend Sydney MacGougan was 92 on December 31.

During the interval, both ladies cut the birthday cake and received flowers in appreciation of their dedication to the association.

Mark Wylie, of Drakes of Hazard fame, chaired the ceilidh. The singers were Alison Wood, Calum Ross, Linda MacCallum, Colin Fisher, and Ian McLean. The accordionist was Willie Scott, the piper Robert Wood, and the accompanist was Kirsteen Grant.

A great night was had by all to kick off 2018.

Celtic Connections under way

This time next week I will be able to report on the first of this year's Celtic Connections shows.

As usual, I include a small selection of shows below. Please bear in mind that there are dozens of other shows that I could not practically

include so head to the festival's website to find details of all the other wonderful music on offer.

What's on at Celtic Connections

Thursday January 18: Celtic Connections 25th anniversary concert in the Glasgow Royal Concert Hall at 7.30pm.

Friday January 19: Iain MacFarlane Trio and Kim Carnie in St Andrews in the Square at 7.30pm.

Saturday January 20: Skerryvore and Wee Banjo 3 in the Barrowland Ballroom at 7.30pm.

Wednesday January 24: Dougie MacLean and Yvonne Lyon in the Glasgow Royal Concert Hall at 7.30pm.

Thursday January 25: Binneas nam Bàn in the Glasgow Royal Concert Hall at 8pm.

Friday January 26: Òrain nan Gàidheal, Songs of the Gael featuring the BBC SSO and special guests in the main auditorium of the Royal Concert Hall at 7.30pm.

Friday January 26: Peatbog Faeries with special guests in the Old Fruitmarket at 8pm.

Wednesday January 31: Mary Ann Kennedy and Luar na Lubre in the Old Fruitmarket at 8pm.

Friday February 2: Skipinnish and Cruinn in the Pavilion Theatre at 7.30pm.

Friday February 2: Elephant Sessions and Notify in the Old Fruitmarket at 9.30pm.

Saturday February 3: Fergie MacDonald, The Ceilidh King in the Pavilion Theatre at 7.30pm.

Saturday February 3: Tide Lines with Cassie and Maggie in St Luke's at 7.30pm.

Sunday February 4: Celtic Connections closing party with Manran and The Young Folk.

Pub scene

Park Bar

Friday: Beinn Lee.

Saturday: Scott Harvey.

Sunday: Beinn Lee.

Islay Inn

Friday January 19: Black Velvet.

Saturday January 20: Deep River.

DIARDAIN 18 FOILTEACH / THURSDAY 18 JANUARY
17.00 Prògraman Chloinne - Children's programming
19.00 Eileanan Fraoich - Tìre (rpt)
19.35 Speaking our Language (rpt)
20.00 An Là - News
20.30 Balaich a' Bhiobaill - students training for the Free Church ministry (rpt)
21.00 DIY le Donnie (rpt)
21.45 Torcuil's Guide to Being a Gael: Biadh (rpt)
22.00 Gaol @ Gael (rpt)
22.30 UR | NEW: Fleasgaich an lasgaich - competitive fishing around the world
23.15 Belladrum 2016: Cridhe Tartan - C. Duncan (rpt)
23.25 Air an Rathad (rpt)

DIHAOINE 19 FOILTEACH FRIDAY 19 JANUARY
17.00 Prògraman Chloinne - Children's programming
18.35 Machair (rpt)
19.00 An Là - News
19.25 Fraochy Bay (rpt)
19.30 Albisidh (rpt)
20.00 Togaidh Sinn Fonn (rpt)
20.30 Kerry is Kirsty: Mòrar gu Arasaig (rpt)

21.00 A' Sireadh Uaigneas (rpt)
21.50 Dhan Uisge - Sanna (rpt)
22.00 Ceòl Country (rpt)
23.00 Aghaidh ri Aghaidh - Martin Luther King v Malcolm X (rpt)
23.50 Binneas - Na Trads - N.E. Folk Collective

DISATHAIRNE 20 FOILTEACH SATURDAY 20 JANUARY
16.00 Prògraman Chloinne - Children's programming
19.25 Machair (rpt)
19.55 Fraochy Bay (rpt)
20.00 Albisidh - Quiz Show (rpt)
20.30 Turas a' Bhradain (rpt)
21.00 Ceòl Country (rpt)
22.00 Fleasgaich an lasgaich - competitive fishing around the world (rpt)
22.50 Belladrum 2016: Cridhe Tartan - Turin Brakes (rpt)
23.30 Tàtù Rioghail Dhun Eideann 2015 (rpt)

DIDOMHNAICH 21 FOILTEACH SUNDAY 21 JANUARY
16.00 Prògraman Chloinne - Children's programming
18.30 Seachd Là
19.30 Alleluia (rpt)
20.00 Balaich a' Bhiobaill - students training for the Free Church ministry (rpt)
20.30 Leugh Mi (rpt)
21.00 Farpaisean Chon-Chaorach (rpt)
22.00 Ceòl Country (rpt)
23.00 Aghaidh ri Aghaidh: Mandela v De Klerk (rpt)
23.50 Dhan Uisge - Sanna (rpt)

DILUAIN 22 FOILTEACH MONDAY 22 JANUARY
17.00 Prògraman Chloinne - Children's programming
19.00 An Lot (rpt)
19.30 Speaking our Language (rpt)
20.00 An Là - News
20.30 UR | NEW: Kerry is Kirsty: Còigeach
21.00 UR | NEW: Trusadh - Clann-nighean nan Taigh-Osda
22.00 Port (rpt)
22.30 Air a' Chanàil - Calum and Niall Iain explore Scotland's canals (rpt)
23.30 Gaol @ Gael (rpt)

DIMÀIRT 23 FOILTEACH TUESDAY 23 JANUARY
17.00 Prògraman Chloinne - Children's programming
19.00 Eileanan Fraoich - Tìre (rpt)
19.30 Speaking our Language (rpt)
20.00 An Là - News
20.30 UR | NEW: Leugh Mi
21.00 UR | NEW: Farpaisean Chon-Chaorach
22.00 Trusadh - Clann-nighean nan Taigh-Osda (rpt)
23.00 Òran na Mnà (rpt)
23.30 Alleluia (rpt)

DICIADAIN 24 FOILTEACH WEDNESDAY 24 JANUARY
17.00 Prògraman Chloinne - Children's programming
19.00 An Lot (rpt)
19.30 Speaking our Language (rpt)
20.00 An Là - News
20.30 UR | NEW: Turas a' Bhradain
21.00 Air a' Chanàil - Calum and Niall Iain explore Scotland's canals (rpt)
21.55 UR | NEW: Scottish Premiership - Dundee v Hibs

DIARDAIN 25 FOILTEACH THURSDAY 25 JANUARY
17.00 Prògraman Chloinne - Children's programming
19.00 Eileanan Fraoich - Gigha (rpt)
19.35 Speaking our Language (rpt)
20.00 An Là - News
20.30 Balaich a' Bhiobaill - students training for the Free Church ministry (rpt)
21.00 DIY le Donnie (rpt)
21.45 Torcuil's Guide to Being a Gael: Aimsir (rpt)
22.00 Gaol @ Gael (rpt)
22.30 UR | NEW: Fleasgaich an lasgaich - competitive fishing around the world
23.15 Binneas - Na Trads (rpt)
23.25 Air an Rathad (rpt)

BBC ALBA logo

Scottish Ballet is flying high after Loganair partnership

SCOTTISH Ballet will be performing in both Oban and the Isle of Lewis this year, thanks to sponsorship from Loganair.

The airline will be flying dancers and team member across the country, meaning they can perform in more remote areas.

The ballet company announced that Loganair will be the official partners of their upcoming tour of Matthew Bourne's Highland Fling.

Loganair, the only airline based and owned in Scotland, will be flying the team across Shetland, Orkney and Lewis with specially chartered flights throughout April and May 2018.

This is the first time Scottish Ballet has toured a full-scale production to such remote locations.

Kay Ryan, commercial director Loganair, said: 'This sponsorship of Scottish Ballet in 2018 very much affirms Loganair's position as Scotland's national airline, emphasising our

commitment to support the local communities we serve by helping to deliver thrilling live performances from Scotland's national dance company.'

Christopher Hampson, CEO/artistic director Scottish Ballet, added: 'We are thrilled to be partnering with Loganair for our spring season [2018]. Touring a complex full length work to remote locations is both challenging and costly. Our partnership with Loganair will not only help us fulfil our vision of bringing ballet to remote locations but will also enable us to create new works, tour more shows and create additional educational projects.'

'We are most grateful for Loganair's support of Highland Fling and look forward to a partnership that helps us continue to fly the flag for dance.'

The Highland Fling will be in Oban's Atlantis Leisure on April 29-30, and in the Sports Centre on the Isle of Lewis on May 3-4.



Scottish Ballet flying high with Loganair.

Pupils set to re-enact epic voyage of Admiral Zheng He

PRIMARY schools in Argyll and Bute, as well as the Highlands, will rehearse and perform an opera about the voyages of 14th-century Chinese commander Admiral Zheng He.

Entitled *The Dragon of the Western Sea*, it has been composed by Alan Penman with lyrics by Ross Stenhouse.

Pupils learn the words and songs in their own classrooms and then work with a Scottish Opera team to prepare for a performance in front of classmates, friends and family.

Scottish Opera's Primary Schools Tour hits

the road on January 15 in Cambuslang and tours all over Scotland until November, giving pupils from primaries five, six and seven the chance to take part in this interactive musical experience.

The Dragon of the Western Sea tells the story of Admiral Zheng He and his vast fleet of ships with 28,000 crew which set sail from China to Indonesia, India, Arabia and the grasslands of Africa in search of trade, treaties and treasure.

The opera will come to schools in the Highlands in spring, and in the summer it will be Argyll and Bute's pupils' turn.

Trolley dash winner

THE winner of *The Oban Times'* trolley dash competition, courtesy of Oban's Tesco supermarket, is Liz MacKenzie from Oban.

Congratulations to Liz, who wins the chance to fill her shopping trolley with up to £200 worth of goods.

Congratulations are also in order for Iona Smith of Oban who won tickets to

see the Legends of American Country Tribute Show, which rolls into Oban's Corran Halls tomorrow, Friday January 19, on its UK tour.

The Oban Times ran the competition on social media and was inundated with entries for the two-hour country extravaganza. Thank you to all those who entered both competitions.



The Oban Times' deputy editor Martin Laing congratulates contest winner Liz MacKenzie, who can fill her trolley free of charge, thanks to Tesco in Oban.

Man with the Golden Beans stops Donald's dodgy deal in Seil panto

IT IS panto time again on Seil, oh yes is it! And the island has its own special take on Jack and the Beanstalk.

And for some reason the villain of the panto is a property developer by the name of Donald ...

Clachan Jack, or the Man with the Golden Beans, is a twist on the traditional tale, but without the beanstalk.

Instead the script features a bridge, a golf course and hidden treasure.

There are two performances in Seil Island Hall on Saturday January 27, at 3pm and 7pm; tickets are on sale in the shop.

The story begins as the island awaits the arrival of a VIP from the USA named Donald (John Colston). He is here to cut a dodgy deal with local landowner Lady Killierankie (Jan Wolfe) and arrives with some shady and distinctly 'foreign' Standing in the way of their nefarious

plans are our hero Jack (Jenn Brunner) and his indomitable mother Ma Bond (John Maclean). Jack is pining for his ex-girlfriend Jill (Gillian MacKechnie) and when she turns up, off they go to find the treasure, aided and abetted by lots of young friends.

But beware, look behind you! It seems there's a giant intent on protecting the gold! The story romps along with eccentric golfers, an invisible dog and a dancing cow. Music and mayhem ensue with all the usual panto fun until baddies are beaten, good fortune returns, and true love wins through.

With a scintillating script by John Colston and dazzling direction by Wendy Dugdale, together with magical music by Maggie Thorpe, colourful costumes by Helen Glennie and superb scenery from Maura Rae and her team, this will be a great show for all the family.

COMMUNITY NOTICEBOARD

If you would like to advertise in the Oban Times Community Noticeboard please call 01631 568000

An Comunn Gàidhealach - Meur Chruachain
Taynuilt Winter Ceilidh
Julie MacFadyen, Ainsley Hamill
Joy Dunlop - Mod Gold Medalist
Hector MacFadyen - Accordion
Plus Full supporting programme
Saturday 20th January
Taynuilt Village Hall, 7.30pm
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MONDAY: 08.00 AM on FM, 08.10 Breakfast Show, 9.00 Monday Morning with Stephen, 11.00 Ian Simmonds on Monday, 17.00 Drivetime, 19.00 Rosie's Highland Fling with Rosie Macoll, 20.00 John McLuckie's Show, 21.00 David Cullen show, 23.00 Station close down

TUESDAY: 08.00 AM on FM, 08.10 Breakfast Show, 10.00 Ken Hunter's Tuesday Morning, 13.00 Macky on FM, 17.00 Drivetime Jim Lynch, 19.00 Highest Praise - Stuart Chalmers, 20.00 Archie Darlings Mix, 22.00 Clyde 2

WEDNESDAY: 08.00 AM on FM, 08.10 Breakfast Show, 09.00 Sound Scottish Repeat, 10.00 Comfort Zone, Doug Carmichael, 11.00 Comfort Zone, 12.00 Comfort Zone, 15.00 The Wednesday Jukebox with Michelle 17.00 Drivetime with Campbell, 19.00 Country Meets Rock & Roll - Len + Ken, 20.00 Country Meets Rock & Roll, 21.00 Gordon's Grooves with Gordon Macintyre

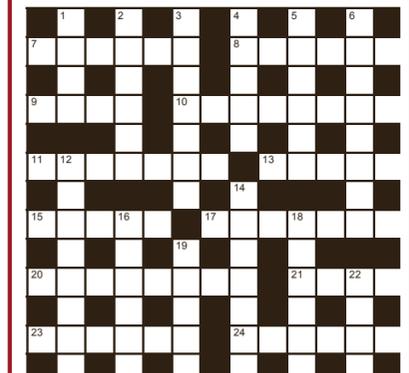
THURSDAY: 08.00 - 11.00 Breakfast with Andy and Sarah, 11.00 Molly's Mix with Molly Black, 13.00 Molly's Mix, 15.00 Drivetime with Stephen, 17.00 Drivetime with Stephen McPhee, 18.00 Drivetime with Stephen McPhee, 19.00 Christines Collection, 22.00 Margo Till Midnight, 11.00 Margo Till Midnight

FRIDAY: 08.00 Breakfast Show with Laura, 10.00 Teeny and Tiny, 17.00 Drive Show with Jim Lynch, 17.30 Drive Show, 18.45 Sports View, 19.00 Country Meets Country with Jackie Craig, 20.00 Lewis Bingham, 21.00 Peter Rainnie

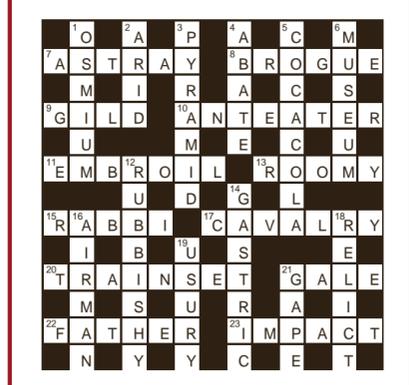
SATURDAY: 08.00 Breakfast Show with Stephen 10.00 Sat Morning Live, 11.00 Saturday Morning, 12.00 Saturday Morning Live with Linda Crowther, 12.00 Sat Morning Live, 12.05 Saturday Morning Live, 13.30 Clyde, 18.00 Sports View - Dream Team, 19.00 Sounds Scottish with Archie Darling, 20.00 Dave Lewis, 22.00 Margo Till Midnight

SUNDAY: 09.00 Sunday Morning With Breege, 10.00 Sunday Morning, 11.00 Sunday Brunch With Archie, 12.00 Sunday Brunch, 16.30 Archie Darling, 18.00 Ken's Friends - Ken Hunter, 19.00 New Country Show - David Entwistle, 21.00 Drum & Bass - Graham Scott, 23.00 Station Close Down

THE OBAN TIMES GENERAL KNOWLEDGE CROSSWORD



- Across**
- 7 Mountain chain (6)
 - 8 Together (6)
 - 9 Sailor's call (4)
 - 10 Judge's address (8)
 - 11 A fourth (7)
 - 13 Tower over (5)
 - 15 Worship (5)
 - 17 Maintained (7)
 - 20 Exercise activity (5-3)
 - 21 Mocking remark (4)
 - 23 Small stream (6)
 - 24 Situate (6)
- Down**
- 1 School group? (4)
 - 2 Plea (6)
 - 3 Jumped (7)
 - 4 Watch over (5)
 - 5 Carpentry tool (6)
 - 6 Dog of good stock (8)
 - 12 Offer for less than the competition (8)
 - 14 Flower (7)
 - 16 Is he a noisy thief? (6)
 - 18 Prohibit (6)
 - 19 Old-fashioned smelling! (5)
 - 22 Report (4)



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Film shows new cycle route



Markus Stitz rides his gravel bike on the new Wild About Argyll Trail.

ARGYLL and the Isles, Scotland's Adventure Coast, provides an awe-inspiring setting for bikepacking – and it now has a new cycling trail to attract participants.

With funding from Argyll and the Isles Tourism Co-Operative, Scottish Natural Heritage and Forestry Commission Scotland, Bikepacking Scotland has added the new trail to its offer recently, and just released the new short film *Wild About Argyll* to showcase the route.

At 655km (407 miles) the Wild About Argyll Trail is a long-dis-

tance cycling route designed specifically with gravel bikes in mind.

While Bikepacking Scotland founder and round the world cyclist Markus Stitz was initially doubtful about the attraction of gravel bikes, a great demand for such a route in a survey conducted as part of the project, with 576 responses from 26 countries, changed his mind.

He said: 'My feelings about gravel bikes were mixed. I never warmed up to the idea of drop bars and off-road.

'This combination only of-

fered limited attraction to me, but I was proven totally wrong since I started working on this project.

'It is the nature of gravel riding – fast and adventurous at the same time – which ultimately changed my mind, and the Wild About Argyll Trail delivers exactly that.'

Argyll and the Isles is showcased as an outstanding coastal region, where 80 per cent of the population live within 1km of water. It not only offers sea lochs, islands, hills and glens to explore, but also an abundance

of forest tracks and paths, which makes it a premium destination for gravel riders. It is also home to a temperate rainforest habitat rarer than tropical rainforests, and a very special place for spotting rare wildlife.

Wild About Argyll was filmed by Markus in October 2017 while riding the route for the first time and follows him on his Surly Straggler gravel bike. This is the latest film to inspire people to visit Argyll, following in the tire tracks of the Wild About Argyll campaign with Mark Beaumont in 2017.

Markus continues: '*Wild About Argyll* was filmed on an iPhone and a drone while riding the trail for the first time. Although the weather was a challenge as frequent rain made it difficult to capture the footage, I think this film portrays well what riding on the west coast of Scotland is about. There's nothing polished in the film.

'For me, riding in Scotland is not about sunny, blue skies every day, it is much more about exploring those dense forests, waterfalls, streams and the beautiful coastal scenery and

hills in all weather conditions that Scotland has to offer.'

The film can be watched on Bikepacking Scotland's YouTube channel at www.youtube.com/bikepackingscotland and Facebook site at www.facebook.com/bikepackingscot.

The Wild About Argyll Trail starts and finishes in Helensburgh, which is also the start or finish of the Argyll Sea Kayak Trail and the John Muir Way.

More information about the route and the GPX file can be found at www.bikepackingscotland.com/argyll.

Children urged to watch the birdies

BLACKBIRDS, sparrows and robins are at the top of the checklist for thousands of school children across Argyll and the Isles as the world's biggest schools' wildlife survey kicks off.

The RSPB Big Schools Birdwatch – which takes place during the first half of the spring term until February 23 – is a chance for children to put down their books and get outside to experience and learn about the nature in their community.

The birdwatch involves children spending an hour watching and counting the birds that visit their outdoor space before sending the results in to the conservation organisation.

A recent survey of 200 teachers and 1,200 children from around the UK revealed 96 per cent of teachers believed it was important for children to experience nature at school, while 77 per cent of pupils agreed. With close to a million children taking part since its launch in 2002, the RSPB Big Schools Birdwatch is a perfect opportunity for youngsters to get outside and make their first discoveries in nature.

Last year, almost 7,000 children and teachers took part in Scotland. Blackbirds held onto their number one spot as the most common playground visitor with 87 per cent of schools spotting one during their watch. Robins, house sparrows and wood pigeons all featured prominently, as well as smaller birds such as blue tits, coal tits and wrens.

For the first time the RSPB has partnered with Cbeebies favourites Twirlywoos to provide new activities and resources specifically tailored to early years, to help get their mini birdwatches off to a flying start.

The Big Schools Birdwatch is a free activity and only takes an hour to complete. Teachers can pick any day during the first half of the spring term, with the flexibility to run it as a one-off or as a centrepiece of a cross-curricular study, project work or a way to improve their outdoor space.

To take part and help the next generation of children start their own wildlife adventure, visit www.rspb.org.uk/birdwatch.

Skye otter sanctuary raises a dram to Uisge and Beatha

MARTIN LAING

mlaing@obantimes.co.uk

UISGE BEATHA – Gaelic for whisky – literally translates as 'water of life'. So when a pair of otter cubs were recently rescued separately and taken to a sanctuary on Skye, it seemed only right to name them Uisge and Beatha.

Both the young otter cubs are now being cared for at the International Otter Survival Fund's (IOSF) sanctuary at Broadford.

Uisge was found at Kilchoan on the Ardnamurchan peninsula after he had lost his mother. Fortunately, he was taken to Hamza Yassin, a wildlife photographer who lives there, and he contacted IOSF and arranged for the transfer to Skye.

The second cub, Beatha, was found crying near Aultbea. She is a lot smaller and so is on a bottle of special otter milk, which she takes greedily.

Uisge already had tiny teeth and so he was soon tucking into fish soup and is now eating pieces of fish.

Once they are both eating well they will be introduced to each other as it is always better to bring up two cubs together.

They will stay at the Broadford otter hospital until they are about a year old as this is when cubs normally leave their mothers.

It is important that human contact is kept to a minimum because they cannot be released back to the wild where



Uisge, left, and Beatha are both doing well and should be released into the wild at about one year old.

they belong if they become tame.

At the same time as caring for the cubs at the centre, IOSF is also active in supporting people working with otters worldwide. At present it is helping with a rare otter cub in Iraq.

This subspecies (*Lutrogale perspicillata maxwelli*) is only found in Iraq and is also called Maxwell's otter after the author Gavin Maxwell. During his

travels in Iraq in 1956 Maxwell found a young otter cub which he brought back to the UK.

This otter became famous as Mijbil in his book *Ring of Bright Water* and the subsequent film. The new cub is being cared for by Omar Al-Sheikhly, who studies otters in the wild, and naturally the cub has been called Maxwell.

Ben Yoxon, of IOSF, said: 'Both cubs are doing really well. Beatha is starting to wean so we hope she will soon be on fish.

'It is also exciting to be able to help people working with these wonderful animals abroad. So far we have been able to help people in 35 countries. Looking after the animals keeps us focused even more on the big picture

of otters and the threats they face in the world from pollution and the illegal wildlife trade for furs and pets.'

Regular updates about the cubs at the Skye sanctuary can be found on the http://www.otter.org/Public/News_Blog.aspx

If anyone finds a cub or injured otter, do not touch it but contact IOSF on 01471 822487.

THIS WEEK'S WALKS

LOCHABER AND LORN RAMBLERS

The walk leader is to be contacted beforehand for meet up and start times. Car sharing usually possible and people can try before they buy. Further information at www.lochaberandlorn-ramblers.org.uk. Lochaber and Lorn Ramblers Group can be contacted by email on info@lochaberandlorn-ramblers.org.uk.

Thursday January 18
Beinn Leamhain, Glen Gour

A short walk, but this craggy little hill has lots of interest and is a great viewpoint. Park off the A861 opposite its junction with the loop road to Sallachan at NM983627.

Cross the main road, head NW past Sallachan and across the bridge over the river.

Turn W on to the track leading into Glen Gour, past Loch nan Gabhar and the ruins at Tigh Ghlinnegabhar.

About 1.2km further at NM 949638, head SSW steeply up a

break in the trees to reach the open hillside and gain the crest of the ridge at about 170m alt. Follow this SE to the summit of Beinn Leamhain, 508m.

Head E, past the twin lochs to the old trig point, 502m. Head NE to a ring contour (400m) on the watershed between the Allt a' Choire Leith and the Allt Camas na Craoibhe, then continue NE down the hillside to rejoin the outward track just before the bridge at Sallachan.

Grade: M; Distance: 7km; Height

to climb: 510m; Map(s): LR40, EX391. Meet at Corran Ferry slip for 9.45am sailing. Start of walk at 10.10am. Leader: Trevor Jones 07831 437454.

Saturday January 20
Stob Coire Raineach, Glen Coe
Part of Buachaille Etive Beag, a classic hill for a short day, with an interesting way down. Great views around Glen Coe. This area is a good place to practise the use of ice axe and crampons.

Start from the CP at NN187562

and head SW on the footpath towards the Lairig Eilde. Just before a high point of the path, take the left fork at NN184558 and climb on a well built path to the col between the two summits of Buachaille Etive Beag.

Turn NE and continue up to the summit of Stob Coire Raineach, 925m. Descend NE until the spur levels out. At NN194553, a ridge to the right of a prominent gully leads down NW towards the start.

This feature is seen to advan-

tage from the car park.
Grade: M+; Distance: 5km; Height to climb: 724m; Map(s): LR41, EX384. Meet at Glencoe village car park at 9.40am. Start of walk at 10am. Leader: Ian Moir 07973 836498.

NEVIS HILLWALKING CLUB
Please see full walk details at www.nevishillwalking.club.

If anyone would like to go out on the walk please contact club secretary Suzanne Theobald on 01397 701783 or email enquir-

ies@nevishillwalking.club.

Sunday January 21
Cnap Cruinn and Beinn Chlianaig, Glen Spean.

Start at Inverlair and take the track S then SW following the Allt Laire to the dam. Continue on the track heading NW between plantations and once out of the trees SW up the rough slopes to the summit of Cnap Cruinn 742m.

Continue NW to Beinn Chlianaig 724m. Descend the broad N ridge, across the Parallel road

BUSINESS NEWS

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Interface matches firms with academic partners

WHAT will 2018 bring for your business? Whether it's new customers, a better product, streamlined processes or improved services, have you thought about working with an academic partner to help achieve your next goal?

Local businesses such as Craine Communications in Oban, Johnnie Mac's Oysters on Lismore, Staffin Community Trust on Skye and Tarbet-based Zing Organics have all benefited from being matched to academic expertise to help develop their ideas.

After learning more about their business challenge, Interface was able to match them with academic partners following a search for relevant expertise across Scotland's universities, research institutes and colleges.

Whether it's a large international conglomerate or a small family-owned business, Interface can help.

'Interface provides a free and impartial service, open to businesses and organisations alike, wherever they are in Scotland,' said Interface business engagement executive Carol-Ann Adams.

'Businesses of all sizes can collaborate with universities, research institutes and colleges to help drive their ideas forward.'

'You have the opportunity to work with academics based anywhere in Scotland - and you choose which one best suits your needs.'

No matter the type of business, there is expertise available to help it grow.

While tourism, food and drink,

engineering, energy and IT are some of the industries that have received assistance from Interface, their friendly experts can work with any type of business in any industry sector.

'Interface will support and guide your business through the process of being matched with academic expertise and can help source funding options to help offset project costs,' Carol-Ann added.

'Impacts for the businesses we work with range from employing more people and expanding product ranges, to breaking into new markets and increasing turnover. In fact, 79 per cent of Interface-assisted businesses have or expect to increase turnover.'

Interface makes it easy for businesses to get a helping hand

and, in a recent survey, 98 per cent said they were either satisfied or extremely satisfied with Interface's service.

Stuart Craine, of Craine Communications, said: 'I would highly recommend this Interface experience to any company looking to progress with an idea or a project. To tap into such an academic source has been extremely valuable.'

For more information on Interface visit www.interface-online.org.uk, call 01463 245263 (for businesses in Argyll and the Isles) or Carol-Ann.Adams@interface-online.org.uk, call 01463 245 262 (for businesses in Lochaber, Skye and Wester Ross).



Carol-Ann Adams.

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alternatively you can pop into the office at 43 Stevenson Street, Oban.

Fish farm stalwart Steve announces retirement after 41 years



AFTER 41 years' service to Scottish salmon farming, one of its pioneers has announced his retirement.

Steve Bracken, business support manager at Marine Harvest Scotland, will retire at the end of July 2018.

Beginning his career as fish farm assistant at Lochailort on May 23, 1977, Steve

is the longest serving employee at Marine Harvest. Steve has held varying management positions during his four decades of service, including a three-year posting in Sri Lanka, before moving to his current communications role in 2000 where he has engaged with media, governments, customers, local communities and NGOs.

At Steve's 40-year service celebration, one colleague paid tribute to 'one of the greatest ambassadors for the aquaculture sector'.

Ben Hadfield, managing director at Marine Harvest Scotland, said: 'I want to personally thank Steve for his enormous contribution to Marine Harvest and for everything he's done

for the Scottish salmon farming sector. We wish you the best in retirement.'

Ian Roberts, director of public relations for Marine Harvest Canada, will take on the role of communications and business development director, Scotland.

A UK citizen, Ian will begin this new role in May and will be based near Fort William.

New restaurant opens second outlet in Oban

THE new Etive Restaurant has opened in Oban.

The restaurant, a joint venture by chef John McNulty and sommelier David Lapsley, is on the site of the old Light of India in Stevenson Street.

The Etive opened in Taynuilt at the start of 2017 and established itself as one of the area's leading restaurants, winning a gold medal for its commitment to real and local food at the inaugural Scottish Food Awards 2017. Its popularity with locals and visitors has meant it has outgrown its location at the old coaching inn.

John and David bring the ethos of the original restaurant 'where sea meets land' to the new site, which will remain a showcase of John's cooking, with affordable a la carte and tasting menus that concentrate on innovative cooking using locally sourced produce. Sommelier David has created a carefully curated wine list and will be offering daily



John and David in the newly opened Etive Restaurant.

changing wine pairings by the glass to match the menu.

Many of the ingredients will come from the kitchen garden in Taynuilt which includes a number of polytunnels as well as hens and a smokery. Seafood comes from Tieve, beef from Achadunan Farm and Ballimore Estate, lamb from Thistle Farm, Iona, and venison from Glenlivet Estate.

John said: 'We are delighted to be taking over the old Light of India site, which was Oban's first Indian restaurant and much loved in the

area. We have worked really hard to establish the Etive so it is very exciting to be joining Oban's culinary scene and introduce what we do to an even wider audience.'

Etive Restaurant will open Wednesday - Sunday for lunch and dinner. A daily market menu will be available for lunch, as well as a tasting fixed price menu served in the evenings.

The Taynuilt is currently closed and undergoing a major refurbishment of its bedrooms. It will reopen later this year.

Companies are urged to attend Scottish DataFest

A SPECIAL week-long programme is being held in the Highlands and Islands demystifying the ways data can be used to change lives, deliver better services and grow business.

Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE) is co-ordinating a local fringe programme as part of the Scottish DataFest18 festival, organised by The Data Lab.

The region's programme is one of 30-plus events being held across Scotland from March the 19 to 23.

DataFest18 is the second data festival hosted by The Data Lab, which is a publicly-funded team of data experts bringing industry, academia and the public sector together to exploit latest data research and skills.

April Conroy, of HIE's digital demonstration centre, #hellodigital, said: 'According to the experts, data innovation is disrupting our lives.'

'We see evidence of it everywhere - its use has created a boom in self-health

monitoring, the relevant ads that appear in our online streams, and in fully integrated online journey planning and ticketing that make booking easier.

'Data is not just about storing your database for business intelligence anymore but about how you can use available techniques to establish how customers may react and behave.'

If you don't run a multi-national business with a team of data scientists at your disposal, how do you benefit from all this capability and where do you start?

The Highlands and Islands fringe events will feature talks, exhibitions, business challenges and breakfast briefings.

Experts will tackle a range of key topics including artificial intelligence, latest research, software, the impact of data on public service delivery, its significance to the creative industries, and practical examples for business on how data is being used.

Contributors to the week will include The Data Lab, the Scottish Government, the National Records of Scotland, NHS: Information Services Division, The Highland Council, Robert Gordon University, Glasgow Caledonian University, Albyn Housing, Centre for Engineering Education and Development (Ceed), Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations (SCVO) and the event will be managed by HIE.

The Data Lab CEO Gillian Docherty said: 'It's brilliant to be able to extend The Data Lab to the Highlands and Islands allowing us to promote the benefits of data-driven problem solving further than ever before.'

The full Highlands and Islands programme, and tickets for the various events, will be announced on the #hellodigital website later in January.

For further information in the meantime contact hidigital@hient.co.uk.

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Data show 2017 was driest year since 2010

By Ewen Campbell,
SRUC's Kirkton and Auchtertyre
research farms manager

WE MAY be well through January but I would like to wish you all a happy new year for 2018.

How will the year compare to 2017? We have been able to find out some interesting information about the weather this past year, since we have an automatic Met Office weather station here at Kirkton (between Crianlarich and Tyndrum).

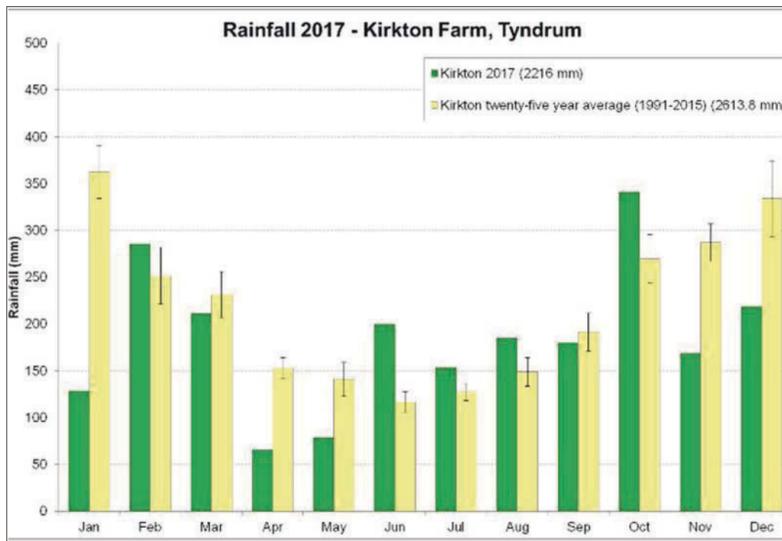
Despite the perceived awful weather, the total rainfall recorded in 2017 was 2,216mm (87 inches), which was considerably less than the 1991-2015 25-year average (2,613.8mm). In fact, 2017 was the driest year since 2010.

The wettest month was October (341 mm or 13.4 inches) and the driest month was April, with 65.4mm of rainfall (only 43 per cent of the 25-year average).

Remember that lovely lambing period we enjoyed? The wettest week was 140mm, between February 19 and 25, and the wettest day was on December 6 (62.6mm in 24 hours).

We also had some interesting temperatures. The lowest temperature recorded during 2017 was on December 11 when it fell to -10.8C. This was the lowest temperature since January 2011. The lowest maximum temperature was recorded on December 10 (-2.3C). This was the only day during 2017 when the temperature failed to rise above freezing.

In contrast, the hottest day was on May 26 (25.7C) and



July was the warmest month with a mean temperature of 13.4C and a mean maximum temperature of 17.3C.

Sleet or snow was recorded falling at the weather station on 23 days during 2017 and lying snow (recorded at 9am) was noted on 26 days.

Unusually, there was only one storm in 2017 when sustained gale force winds were recorded at the farm (January 11) and there were only two days when thunder and lightning were recorded (August 23 and September 29).

I would like to thank the Met Office for supplying us with the daily weather data from its automatic weather station.

These, and the fact that we had good grass growth at the back end of 2016, meant that sheep performance for

2017 has been fine. For our Kirkton research flock (Scottish blackface and Lleyens), the average scanning rate was 1.39 lambs per ewe, and the barren rate was better than some previous years, with seven per cent of ewes not carrying lambs.

We had 727 lambs born out of our 580 ewes, with an average lamb birth weight of 3.8kg. The weaning percentage this year was 1.1 lambs/ewe, and the average lamb weaning weight was 26.6kg. In total, we got 29.3kg lamb weaned per ewe mated.

We are still finalising results for our high hill flock at Auchtertyre, but the year has been good.

The rams have been taken back in in the past couple of weeks and the ewes have

been weighed and wormed.

The condition of the Kirkton BF ewes and the Lley ewes is now assessed entirely using their weight and as things stand their weights are still fine, despite the spell of snow and ice we had recently.

Let's see how it goes at scanning in February, which we are now preparing for.

The cattle will start calving in February. We have 24 Aberdeen Angus cross cows which are all scanned in calf to our shorthorn bull, and the eight Highland cows which were in-calf to a shorthorn bull when we bought them in November. We will calve the Aberdeen Angus in the shed here at Kirkton, and the Highlanders will calve outside.

Here's hoping that the weather is good for them!

Around the markets

LOCHBOISDALE - United Auctions held their annual early New Year sale of all classes of cattle and sheep at Lochboisdale Auction Mart. A mixed show sold at values comparing very favourably to current Mainland values. Bulls from No136 Stillgarry sold to 270 pence per kilo for Charolais crosses while 11 Howmore sold Limousin bullocks to £1280 per head and the same home led the heifer section, both per head and per kilo at £840 and 233 pence respectively. Cast cows from 11 Howmore sold to 1210 per head while 22 Hacklet led this section per kilo at 157 pence.

Principal lots and prices.

Bullocks:
Aberdeen Angus: 8 Milton - £840; 310 Kilphedar - £760; 8 Milton - £740; 19 Balashare - £730; 8 Milton & 7 Frobost - £700

Blonde: 2 Grimsay Island - £640 & £620

Charolais: 136 Stillgarry - £1100, £1040, £1000, £860 & £840

Limousin: 11 Howmore - £1280, £1180, £1120; 15 Ormiclate - £850 & £820; 8 Milton - £810

Shorthorn: 18 West Gerinish - £720

Heifers:
Aberdeen Angus: 9 Bornish - £710; 8 Milton - £700; 19 Balashare - £680; 342 North Boisdale & 319 Kilphedar - £660; 8 Milton - £640 & £620; 2 Drimisdale - £610

Blonde: 2 Grimsay Island - £680 & £630

Charolais: 136 Stillgarry - £810, £780, £730 & £710

Limousin: 11 Howmore - £840; 325 North Boisdale & 342 North Boisdale - £670; 3 Drimisdale - £660; 15 Ormiclate - £640

Shorthorn: 91 Bualadubh - £820 & £750

Simmental: 136 Stillgarry - £630

Leading prices per kilo.
Bullocks:
Aberdeen Angus: 19 Balashare - 225; 8 Milton - 221 & 219

Blonde: 2 Grimsay Island - 225

Charolais: 136 Stillgarry - 270, 245, 239 & 227

Limousin: 5 Dunganachy - 256, 250 & 249; 11 Howmore - 247; 15 Ormiclate - 243 & 238; 5 Dunganachy - 227

Shorthorn: 18 West Gerinish - 206

Heifers:
Aberdeen Angus: 8 Milton - 219

Blonde: 2 Grimsay Island - 227

Charolais: 136 Stillgarry - 217, 216 & 203

Limousin: 11 Howmore - 233; 325 North Boisdale & 342

North Boisdale - 223; 3 Drimisdale - 213; 5 Dunganachy - 205
Shorthorn: 91 Bualadubh - 205
Simmental: 136 Stillgarry - 210

Cast cows:
Aberdeen Angus: 4 Kildonan - £950 (123p); 393 Garrynamonie - £860 (119p)

Limousin: 7 Frobost - £1020 (137p); 11 Howmore - £990 (134p); 22 Hacklet - £980 (157p)

Simmental: 11 Howmore - £1210 (137p); 344 North Boisdale - £1100 (133p).

DINGWALL - Lochmaddy, Dingwall and Highland Marts on January 11 sold 154 weaned calves and store cattle, two adult head of breeding cattle and 10 OTM cattle.

Bullocks (88) averaged 207.9p and sold to 290.0p per kg for a 300kg Limousin cross from 14 Hougharry, Lochmaddy, and £880 gross for a 365kg Limousin cross from 1 Knockline, Bayhead.

Heifers (66) averaged 187.5p per kg and sold to 262.3p per kg for a 305kg Limousin cross from 10 Sollas, Lochmaddy, and £800 gross twice for a pair of 350kg Limousin crosses from 14 Hougharry and for a 305kg Limousin cross from 10 Sollas.

Breeding cattle (2) sold to £1,120 gross for a Simmental cross cow with a calf at foot from Hastain, Bayhead.

OTM cattle (10) sold to 151.9p per kg for a 645kg Aberdeen Angus cross from 7 Sollas, Lochmaddy, and £980 gross twice for a 755kg Shorthorn cross from Dunskeellar, Lochmaddy and for a 645kg Aberdeen Angus cross from 7 Sollas.

Other leading prices per head and per kg:
Bullocks up to 250kg - 15 Tigharry, Lochmaddy, £600, 260.9p; 251-300kg - 14 Hougharry, Lochmaddy, £870, Burnbank, Knockintorran, 243.3p; 301-350kg - 8 Clachan Sands, Lochmaddy, £820, 25 Balemore, Bayhead, 243.8p; 351-400kg - 13 Knockintorran, Paiblesgarry, £860, 1 Knockline, Bayhead, 241.1p; 401-450kg - 7 Tigharry, Lochmaddy, £800, 195.1p.

Heifers up to 250kg - Hastain, Bayhead, £500, 222.2p; 251-300kg - Taigh Fada, Paiblesgarry, £660, 230.5p; 301-350kg - No 1 Clachan Farm, Lochmaddy, £780, 13 Knockintorran, 236.9p; 351-400kg - 14 Hougharry, £790, 222.5p.

STIRLING - Caledonian Marts on Thursday January 11 sold 188 cattle comprising 107 prime bullocks, heifers and

young bulls, and 81 cast cows and bulls.

Once again all classes would be no cheaper on the week and many more could have been sold.

Bullocks averaged 220p
Heifers averaged 221p
Young bulls averaged 178p

Beef cows averaged 130.5p
Dairy cows averaged 96.6p
Bullocks sold to 248ppkg for a Limousin from Brockwoodlees, Canonbie to W W Wales Ltd, Kilmarnock and to £1636 from Learielaw, Broxburn.

Heifers sold to 258ppkg for a Limousin from Knockhouse, Dunfermline to T Johnston Butchers, Falkirk and to £1604 for the same animal.

Leading prices
Bullocks pkgg:
245p Learielaw & Knockhouse

242p Balquharrage & Easter Ochtermuthill 240p Brockwoodlees 238p Balquharrage (twice) 235p Spittal (Gardner) & Faskine 230p Blackhill 228p Spittal (twice) & Millearne

Heifers pkgg:
250p Learielaw (twice)
248p Easter Ochtermuthill & Pitcairn 245p Easterton (Owen), Knockhouse & Easter Ochtermuthill 242p Blackhill, Brockwoodlees, Knockhouse & Easter Ochtermuthill 235p Pirnhall, Bogleys & Ramornie 232p Blackhill

Also forward were 81 cast cows and bulls.
Beef cows averaged 130.5p (+6.5p on the week) selling to 183.5p for a Limousin from Ferguson Bros, Gillandersland, and to £1500 for a Limousin from W Dick & Sons, Mains of Throsk.

Bulls sold to £1550 for a Limousin from R Graham & Son, Airthrey Kerse, and to 157p from the same home.

Dairy cows averaged 96.6p (+7.6p on the week) selling to 117.4p from Muirhead Dairy, Overton and to £850 from the same home.

Other leading prices.
Beef cows per head: £1350 Blackhill £1310 Pirnhall £1200 Gillandersland £1150 Blaircressnock £1150 & £1140 Templehall

Beef cows per kilo:
176p Mains of Throsk 165p Pirnhall 163p Blackhill 152p Gillandersland 150p Templehall 150p Mains of Throsk

Dairy cows per head:
£780 Harvieston £680 High Cattadale £650 & £630 Overton

Dairy cows per kilo:
104p & 100p Harvieston 97p High Cattadale 97p & 95p Overton

Bulls per head
£1160 offers
Bulls per kilo
130p offers.

Farm Management Handbook goes digital

IT HAS been the bane of many an agricultural student's life, and an invaluable tool to farmers for decades.

Now, after almost 40 years of keeping the agricultural industry up to date with the latest data on crops, livestock and finances, the latest edition of the Farm Management Handbook has gone digital.

With support from the Scottish Government and the European

Union as part of the SRDP Farm Advisory Service, the online version is free to download, widening access to its contents at a time when uncertainty around Brexit is rife.

Produced by SAC Consulting, part of Scotland's Rural College, the 38th edition of the book is also available in print format - ideal for keeping a copy in the farm office or the tractor. In response to current needs, the new handbook

contains additional information, including:

- Grassland and forage costs
- Land tenure and land reform
- New entrants
- Diversification

SAC Consulting has also added a new section for crofters and small farmers to provide enterprise margins and business information tailored to their needs. Given changes in the details of Rural Aid and renewable energy

schemes, updated guidance has also been provided.

Julian Bell, senior rural business consultant at SAC Consulting, said: 'As no other industry is controlled, supported and regulated more heavily by EU regulations and institutions, agriculture is widely held to be the sector most affected by Brexit.'

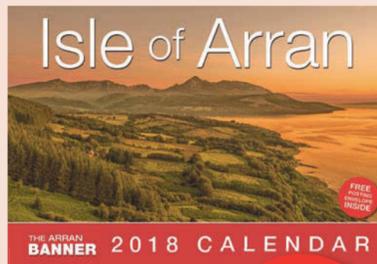
'The future for agricultural markets and support has scarcely been less certain.'

Scottish Calendars 2018

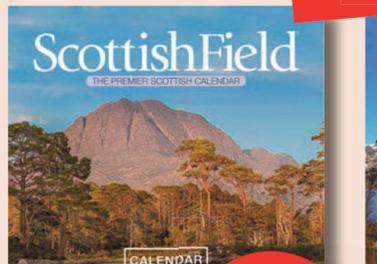
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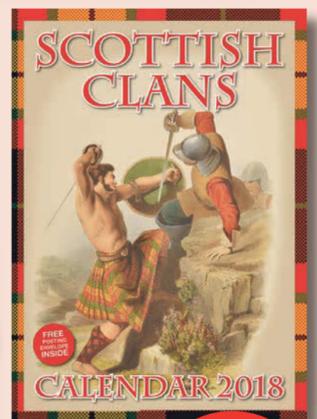
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10 New Year's resolutions for farmers

1. Support local farmers

Farmers are a tight-knit group and can rely on one another for support. Becoming an active member of the farming community, whether it's becoming a vendor at a farmers' market or making a presentation on behalf of farmers, can bring the community together and show that it is stronger than ever.

2. Embrace technology/innovation

Technology is becoming an integral part of the agricultural landscape. With hundreds of apps, the growing popularity of drones and other innovations that have yet to be introduced, embracing the new technologies can be a way to stay ahead of the game and ensure you have all the tools necessary for a successful farming operation.

3. Evaluate the future

A new year means new beginnings, opinions and outlooks. Use the start of 2018 to evaluate the future of the farm. How long do you want to keep running the farm? How involved do any children want to be? Does a succession plan need to be designed? Taking time to answer these questions can help you prepare for the immediate and distant future.

4. Set aside down time

Being in the fields can be very time consuming, physically, and mentally draining. Nobody will argue that the work needs to be done, but it is important to give your body and mind time to relax and recover. Take the beginning of 2018 to possibly create a schedule as to when you'll take some time for yourself and your family.

5. Attend farm shows

Farm shows can be a great way to network, take in round-table discussions and see the latest innovations in agricultural technology.

6. Engage with the general public

Consumers are more conscious about where their food comes from and have many questions about it. Taking the time to engage with the public through social media or other avenues can open the lines of communication and help consumers understand their food is being produced safely and with the health of the environment in mind.

7. Increase the commitment to safety

Almost as important as the crops, machinery and livestock is the safety of the people who work to have a successful operation. Use the new year to take an inventory of the safety measures on your farm and decide if any more steps need to be taken. An extra light on a barn or a small section of fence can go a long way in keeping everyone and every animal on the farm safe.

8. Try something new

Whether it is changing your stock or utilising another form of technology, use the beginning of a new year to research experimenting on the farm. Some things may work, some things may not; but you won't know for sure unless you try.

9. Become an 'agvocate'

Make 2018 the year to use social media platforms and other means to become an agvocate and tell the real stories behind agriculture.

10. Be active on social media

Social media outlets like Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and others can be a great way to interact with other farmers or keep track of latest market trends and breaking news.



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Massey Ferguson 5455 4WD, 2006, c/w Mailleux loader, 40k, 85HP	£20,995
McCormick CX95, 2009, c/w MX U8 loader, 40K air con, 90HP	£20,995
New Holland T5040 4WD, 2010, c/w MX T6 PCH Loader, 85 HP	£20,995
Kubota M9540, 2010, c/w Kubota loader / bucket, hyd shuttle, 40k...£20,995	
Landini Vision 90 4WD, 2003, c/w Quicke loader, 90HP	£19,795
Zetor Proxima 95, 2010, only 1100 hours, 90HP, 80% tyres, 90HP	£19,495
Massey Ferguson 4255 4WD, 2001, 95 HP	£15,495
Zetor 7341 4WD, 2004, c/w Tralift Loader, 1 owner from new	£15,495
Case 4230 4WD, 1998 R492 DUA, c/w Tanco Loader, 85HP	£12,995
Massey Ferguson 6170 4WD, 1995, c/w Front linkage & spools	£11,495
Kubota 4240, 4WD, 2013, power shuttle, air con, new front agri tyres...	£12,795
Case 895 XL Duo, 4WD, c/w Quicke 2560 Loader 85HP	£10,995
Goldoni 30DT Compact 4WD Tractor, Trailer & Mower	£8995
John Deere 2140 2WD, 1981, SG2 cab, 82HP, Power synchron	£7295
John Deere 2140 XE 2WD, 1985, 80HP approx., 2 spools, top link	£6795
Kubota B2400 Compact, 2006, Snow Plough and Salt Spreader	£4995
International 674, 2wd, c/w loader, bucket and fork	£3795
Kubota U25-3 Mini Excavator, 2.5 Ton, 2007, c/w 3 buckets	£13,495
Bobcat E08 Mini Excavator, Brand New, c/w 3 buckets	£12,795
Neuson 3001 3 Ton Swivel Skip Dumper, 2013, AWD, Hydrostatic	£11,995
Twaites 1 Ton Hi Tip Dumper, 2014, AWD, Hydrostatic	£10,795
Ammann AV12-2 Double Drum Vibrating Roller, 2011	£7795
Honda ATV's & Pioneer 700 side by side, in stock	£900
Arctic Cat Prowler 500cc, utility vehicle, brand new	£6995
Honda Foreman 500cc, 2007, 4 new tyres, serviced	£3495

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LAST CHANCE TO VOTE

Pet Idol!

Time to vote for your WINNER!

029



Marni
Jack Russell Terrier
Caol, Fort William

068



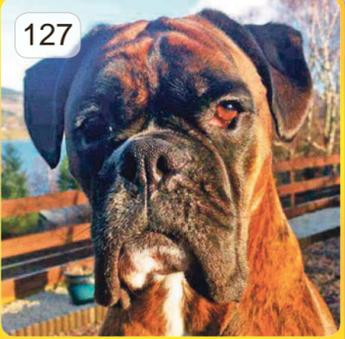
Mr Bigglez
Staffordshire Bull Terrier
Bowmore, Isle of Islay

072



Daniel
Goldfish
Lochgilthead

127



Bracken
Boxer
Fort William

207



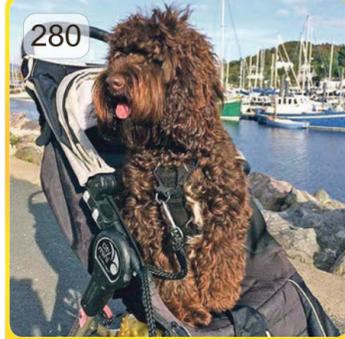
Max
Cheviot tup lamb
Oban

277



Bear
Dog
North Connel

280



Hamish
Cockapoo
Tarbert

282



Keira
Boxer/Staffordshire Bull Terrier cross
Oban

332



Blue
Dog
Oban

348



Finn
Cockapoo
Campbeltown

Time to vote for your WINNER!

It seems that readers all agree that a pet is not just for Christmas. Despite being preoccupied with all-things festive you continued to vote in your thousands before, during and after Santa's big day, and we are now in a position to reveal the top 10 pets in the race to become Pet Idol. Our staff are worn out counting the votes, but we are nearly ready to crown our champion. Voting for the winner is now open and you have until 10am on Monday 22nd January to get your votes to us. We will then announce our winner on Thursday 25th/Friday 26th January. Go on, give it one last push for your favourite furball and get voting.

VOTING COUPON

FINAL

I would like to vote for:

Pet number*:

Pet's name:

Please post to Wyvex Media, Pet Idol VOTE, PO Box 1, Oban, Argyll, PA34 4HB, or votes can also be handed in to our offices in Oban, Fort William, Lochgilthead and Campbeltown.

*Pet number must be supplied. This can be found at the top left of each pet photograph. Photocopied voting coupons will not be accepted and will not count as one vote. You may send in multiple voting coupons in one envelope. Votes must be received by 10am, Monday 22nd January.

The Oban Times & WEST HIGHLAND TIMES LOCHABER TIMES & Oban Times argyllshire advertiser campbeltown courier

Votes must be received by 10am, Monday 22nd January.

You can vote for as many pets as many times as you like. Only one pet can be voted for on each voting form. Just make sure you use the number quoted on the pet's photograph when voting. Photocopied coupons will not be accepted. One coupon counts as one vote. We will also accept multiple vote coupons in one envelope.



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Fancy a change of scenery?

We are looking for self-motivated and customer friendly people to join our growing business.

If you are looking to steer your career in a new direction let us take you there. We welcome experienced PCV drivers or those looking for a change.



Seasonal PCV drivers – Mull (April – October)

Join us on the beautiful Island of **Mull**, accommodation will be provided in a static caravan in Craignure on this picturesque island. Hours of work will vary and you must be able to offer flexibility. You will earn a competitive rate of pay plus seasonal bonuses. Shifts are available for PCV service work, private hires and tours. Experience of previous tour work will be advantageous.

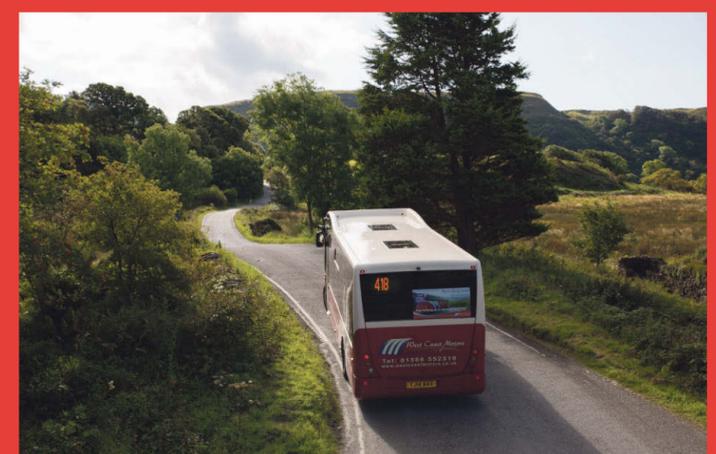
Seasonal full time customer service advisors – West Coast Tours shop, Oban (March – October)

Are you friendly and outgoing and love meeting new people? Then join us in our busy Tour Shop in **Oban**. You will sell bus and tour tickets and provide information on all of our trips and tours to visitors wishing to experience the magic of Mull, Staffa, Iona, and The Treshnish Isles. Hours shall vary and shifts will be available between the hours of 06.00hrs to 18.00hrs 5 days from 7, flexibility is required. Competitive rate of pay. Previous customer service experience in a fast paced environment will be advantageous

Permanent full and part time PCV drivers and trainee PCV drivers - Oban

We are looking for experienced and professional PCV bus & coach drivers for full and part time work based at our **Oban** depot. We operate buses and coaches on a mix of school contracts, local services, school and private group hires. Weekend and evening work will be required. We also offer **PCV driver training** available up to the value of £1500.

If you are interested in any of these roles and want to take your career in a new direction please email your CV to enquiries@westcoastmotors.co.uk or visit our website at www.westcoastmotors.co.uk.



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Full driving licence is essential.
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Steinsvik has considerable competence and experience in delivering products and technical solutions to the Aquaculture industry. We have more than 60 years of experience in developing innovative and robust solutions that will withstand the rigors of time.
We have offices all around the world; Norway, Scotland, Chile, Vietnam, Canada, Oceania, Spain and Turkey. We are also represented in Iceland and on the Faroe Islands.
If you think you would like to apply and join our increasingly diverse team please email your Covering Letter and CV to adminsotland@steinsvik.no
Alternatively, if you do not have access to the internet please post your Covering Letter and CV to Steinsvik UK, Unit 35B Ben Nevis Industrial Estate, Fort William, Inverness-Shire, PH33 6PR marked for the attention of Christina Smith.
Closing Date 26th Jan 2018

The Scottish Salmon Company

Your Career Right Here

Marine Operative
Ardcastle
Salary: Competitive plus overtime
We are recruiting for a Marine Operative to join our site at Ardcastle. Applicants will be enthusiastic, self-motivated and be able to demonstrate prior experience of working in small teams. Duties will include all the day to day operations of the site including fish welfare, sampling, grading and moving of stock, site maintenance and boat handling. Applicants must have good practical and problem solving skills and ideally have marine experience. Previous fish farming experience would be useful, but not essential as training will be provided. A full clean driving licence is also essential for this position.

Marine Operatives x2
Furnace
Salary: Competitive plus overtime
We are also recruiting for two Marine Operatives to join our site at Furnace. Applicants will be enthusiastic, self-motivated and be able to demonstrate prior experience of working in small teams. Duties will include all the day to day operations of the site including fish welfare, sampling, grading and moving of stock, site maintenance and boat handling. Applicants must have good practical and problem solving skills and ideally have marine experience. Previous fish farming experience would be useful, but not essential as training will be provided. A full clean driving licence is also essential for this position.
To request an application form and/or a detailed job specification, please see contact details below.
To apply and/or request a detailed job specification, please contact:
Natalie Randamy
The Scottish Salmon Company
8 Melville Crescent, Edinburgh, EH3 7JA
Tel: 0131 718 8547
natalie.randamy@scottishsalmon.com
Closing date: Friday 26 January 2018
www.scottishsalmon.com

The Scottish Salmon Company

Your Career Right Here

Marine Operative (Net Wash) x2
Middle Loch Fyne
Salary: Competitive plus overtime
We are recruiting for two Marine Operatives to join our net washing team, which operates across all Middle Loch Fyne sites. Under the direction of the Site Manager, duties will include cleaning nets, operating and maintaining net cleaning equipment to a high standard. Applicants must have sound practical and problem solving skills along with good standards of fitness, with the ability to pass a full ML5 medical. Previous net washing experience would be useful, but is not essential as full training will be provided. As this position involves travelling, a full clean driving licence is essential.
Marine Operatives (Net Wash) x2
Upper Loch Fyne
Salary: Competitive plus overtime
We are also recruiting for two Marine Operatives to join our net washing team, which operates across all Upper Loch Fyne sites. Under the direction of the Site Manager, duties will include cleaning nets, operating and maintaining net cleaning equipment to a high standard. Applicants must have sound practical and problem solving skills along with good standards of fitness, with the ability to pass a full ML5 medical. Previous net washing experience would be useful, but is not essential as full training will be provided. As this position involves travelling, a full clean driving licence is essential.
To apply and/or request a detailed job specification, please contact:
Natalie Randamy
The Scottish Salmon Company
8 Melville Crescent, Edinburgh, EH3 7JA
Tel: 0131 718 8547
natalie.randamy@scottishsalmon.com
Closing date: Friday 26 January 2018
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For more information, please contact Vivienne Litster on 01546 605 822 or email vivienne.litster@acha.co.uk
Closing Date: 12 noon on 26 January 2018
Interviews will be held on 7 February 2018 in Lochgilthead.

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Closing date: Friday 26th January 2018
For job description, or to apply by sending CV and covering letter, please contact lynda@alienergy.org.uk
www.alienergy.org.uk

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A full job description can be obtained from Argyll Caravan Park Reception or by contacting manager@argyllcaravanpark.com
Applications in writing, together with a CV should be sent to manager@argyllcaravanpark.com to arrive no later than 26th January 2018

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Please telephone 01967 402221.

RECRUITMENT HIJOBS

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PROPERTY SERVICES
LOCHABER HOUSING ASSOCIATION PROPERTY SERVICES
A Community Interest Company

Plumber

LHA Property Services provides a first class 24 hour maintenance service to tenants of Lochaber Housing Association along with private, commercial and domestic customers.
We are looking for an experienced plumber to support our maintenance team. You should be fully qualified and have experience in the fitting of bathrooms and oil fired heating systems. Experience of Air Source heating would be an advantage although training will be provided.
In return, the successful candidate will receive an excellent remuneration package including:
• a salary of £28173 (pay award pending)
• an additional on-call allowance.
• 35 hour working week
• 40 days annual leave.
• a company pension with employer contributions of 4%
• training
• full PPE/workwear provided.
A full clean driving licence is essential for this post as is a Basic Disclosure check. To request an application pack or for further information please contact Nicola Gilbert, LHA Corporate Services Administrator on 01397 709240, or email recruitment@lochaberhousing.org.uk, or in person at Lochaber Housing Association, 101 High Street, Fort William, PH33 6DG.
Please note CVs will not be accepted.
LHA Property Services is an Equal Opportunities Employer and welcomes applicants from all sections of the community.
Closing date for returned applications: Noon on Friday 02nd February 2018

Simmers & Co
Chartered Accountants
Bookkeeping and VAT
35 hours per week
We require an individual with a pleasant and professional manner to maintain client records and prepare VAT returns in our busy accountancy practice. Previous experience would be of advantage but relevant training will be provided. Salary offered will depend on level of experience.
Please send CV and a covering letter by 01 February 2018 to:
The Staff Partner at
Albany Chambers, Albany Street, Oban PA34 4AL
or by e mail to mail@simmers.co.uk
www.simmers.co.uk

Commercial Marine Services

Skipper and Crew
required for marine tourism operator.
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C.V.'s please to sarah@commercialmarine.services
by 26th January 2018



1) Depot Administrator

We are seeking to recruit a Depot/Yard Administrator to oversee the daily operation of our busy Oban yard. This is a great opportunity to join a successful, well-established local business which has an unrivalled reputation for delivering first-class service.

We require a highly-motivated individual with the initiative and drive to help others develop and succeed. Excellent communication and people management skills are essential. The ideal candidate will possess a strong desire to identify and implement improvements. The ability to prioritise tasks and organise the workload of a busy team will be required in addition to a commitment to providing the best possible customer service.

The ideal candidate will possess:

- Previous supervisory experience which demonstrates an aptitude for developing people and building an effective, efficient team.
- A good standard of computer literacy and a good level of familiarity and competency with general office administration.
- An ability to work on your own initiative as well as part of a larger team.
- Good problem-solving skills coupled with an ability to plan ahead and utilise resources efficiently.
- Experience with stock control and the scheduling of delivery runs would be an advantage.
- Forklift experience and ADR qualification desirable but training can be provided for the right candidate.
- A reasonable standard of physical fitness is required as the job will entail regular handling of gas cylinders.
- A full clean driving licence desirable.

Pay dependant on experience and qualifications, attractive salary available to right candidate.

2) HGV Drivers

Experienced HGV drivers required Oban and Mull. Work will involve driving a variety of vehicles including mixers, tippers and skip lorries. Applicants must have Class 2 licence (LGV Category C) and up to date CPC hours. Competitive rates of pay.

3) Delivery Driver

Reliable delivery driver required in Lochgilphead area. ADR and CPC hours preferred although full training will be available to the right candidate.

4) Apprentice Mechanic

Apprentice plant mechanic required for our Oban workshop. Training divided between practical workshop experience and college instruction. Minimum three National 4 or 5s or equivalent required. Successful candidate will be reliable, diligent with an aptitude for and interest in mechanical engineering.

All above:

Please send CV, clearly stating which position you are interested in to: susan@argyllresources.co.uk or post to: Argyll Resources Group, c/o John MacLachlan Ltd Head Office, Torran Gorm Industrial Estate, Oban, Argyll PA34 4PL. Tel: 01631 566370



**Board of Management Vacancy
Dreuchd Bhàn air a' Bhòrd-stiùiridh**

West Highland College UHI is a growing, dynamic and successful provider of higher and further education in the West Highlands and is currently recruiting for an additional Board of Management member.

We are seeking an individual to help guide the strategic direction of the College and foster an environment which enables the potential of learners to be maximised. You will bring your expertise and skills used in business and in the community to support the management and staff as they continue the development and work of the College. Individuals with strong business and financial skills would be especially welcome at this time.

Time commitment is c. 15-18 days annually. Most Board meetings take place in the late afternoon. Board members are not remunerated but out of pocket expenses will be paid.

Closing Date 1 February 2018 at 9am
Interviews 19 February 2018 in Fort William

How to Apply

Application pack available at: www.whc.uhi.ac.uk/staff/vacancies
For further information, contact Secretary to the Board
Email: claire.wylie.whc@uhi.ac.uk Tel: 01397 874525

In line with our Equality and Diversity policy, West Highland College UHI is committed to ensuring that all candidates are treated on the basis of their merits and abilities, and that unfair and unlawful discrimination is eliminated. We positively welcome applications from all sections of the community.

Applications from women are especially encouraged since they are currently under-represented on the College Board.



North Argyll Carers Centre seeks to recruit a Manager

North Argyll Carers Centre is a value-based charity, which supports those who look after a family member or friend due to illness, disability, frailty or addiction, on an unpaid basis. We provide information and advice as well as practical and emotional support.

We are recruiting a Manager to build on our success and to sustain and grow our organisation. This is a highly demanding role and the successful applicant will have significant leadership experience, demonstrate strategic awareness, a sound understanding of working with carers and be an effective and visible ambassador for carers.

The successful candidate will work closely with the Board of Trustees to deliver our organisation's strategy. This will involve developing and implementing our business plan, maintaining and seeking partnerships, increasing income and continuing to raise the profile of North Argyll Carers Centre.

37 hours per week - £28,000-36,500 depending on experience
Closing date: Monday 5th February 2018

North Argyll Carers Centre's commitment to Equal Opportunities is reflected in our selection process

For a recruitment pack or further information please contact Morag MacLean on telephone 01631 564422/
07771647290 or email: morag@northargyllcarers.org.uk

Registered Charity No: SC040902

PUBLIC NOTICES

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E-MAIL: adverts@obantimes.co.uk
Please remember to give your name, address, postcode and phone number.

**THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL (B8006 LOCHYSIDE)
(TEMPORARY ROAD CLOSURE) ORDER 2018**

On 12 January 2018 The Highland Council made the above Order in terms of Section 14 (1) of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 to enable The Highland Council's Roads Department to carry out essential surface repairs

The use by vehicles of the length of road specified in the Schedule hereto is prohibited from 7pm - 11pm each day during the period the above Order is in force from 7pm on Tuesday 6th February 2018 until 11pm on Thursday 8th February 2018 inclusive, or until the work are completed, whichever is earlier. This allows for flexibility for any unforeseen delays. Access will be provided for emergency vehicles, services buses and residents access for properties leading up to 'Caberfeidh' from A830/B8006 junction. Cyclists and Pedestrians using Soldiers Bridge will be required to wait at a signed safe point to be escorted safely through the site. A signed diversion route will be in place for all other vehicles.

A copy of the Order can be inspected at the Service Point, Lochaber House, High Street, Fort William, on weekdays during normal office hours.

12/01/2018 Mrs Lesley Howie, Legal Manager Highland Council HQ, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness 2018

SCHEDULE

Road B8006 Lochyside
Commencing at a point 394 metres west of the A830/B8006 (south junction) extending in a north easterly direction for 246 metres or thereby.

Argyll and Bute Council

PLANNING

These applications listed below together with other related documents may be inspected between 09:00-12:30 -13:30-16:00 hrs Monday to Friday at Municipal Buildings Albany Street Oban PA34 4AW, 1A Manse Brae Lochgilphead PA31 8RD, at the alternative locations detailed below during their normal opening times or by logging on to the Council's website at www.argyll-bute.gov.uk.

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT PROCEDURE (SCOTLAND) REGULATIONS 2013 REGULATION 20(1) ADVERT STATEMENT
TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (SCOTLAND) ACT 1997 (AS AMENDED), RELATED PLANNING (LISTED BUILDINGS AND CONSERVATION AREAS) (SCOTLAND) ACT 1997

Ref. No.	Proposal	Site Address	Location of Plans
17/03004/PPP	Site for the erection of dwellinghouse	Land West Of Starchmill Farm (Plot 2) Glen Road Bridgend Isle Of Islay Argyll And Bute	Sub Post Office Bridgend
17/03007/PPP	Site for the erection of dwellinghouse	Land West Of Starchmill Farm (Plot 5) Glen Road Bridgend Isle Of Islay Argyll And Bute	Sub Post Office Bridgend
17/03006/PPP	Site for the erection of dwellinghouse	Land West Of Starchmill Farm (Plot 4) Glen Road Bridgend Isle Of Islay Argyll And Bute	Sub Post Office Bridgend
17/03236/PP	Removal of condition number 5 of planning permission 01/94/0409 restricting occupancy.	Harbourmaster House Melfort Pier Kilmelford Oban PA34 4XD	Sub Post Office Kilmelford
17/03003/PPP	Site for the erection of dwellinghouse	Land West Of Starchmill Farm (Plot 1) Glen Road Bridgend Isle Of Islay Argyll And Bute	Sub Post Office Bridgend
17/03005/PPP	Site for the erection of dwellinghouse	Land West Of Starchmill Farm (Plot 3) Glen Road Bridgend Isle Of Islay Argyll And Bute	Sub Post Office Bridgend
17/03093/PP	Erection of 4 dwellinghouses	Land West Of Kenmore Cottage Bonawe Argyll And Bute	Sub Post Office Connel
17/03254/PP	Siting of 2no. transformers, 1no. generator and 2no. bundled oil storage tanks	Cruachan Power Station Lochawe Dalmailly Argyll And Bute PA33 1AN	Sub Post Office Dalmailly

Written comments can be made to the above address or submitted online <http://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/planning-and-environment/find-and-comment-planning-applications> within 21 days of this advert. Please quote the reference number in any correspondence. Any letter of representation the Council receives is considered a public document and will be published on our website. Anonymous or marked confidential correspondence will not be considered. A weekly list of all applications can be viewed at all Area Offices, Council Libraries and on the Councils website.

To find out more about living and working in Argyll & Bute visit us at: www.argyll-bute.gov.uk
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**Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003:
Part 2 Community Right to Buy**
Return of ballot results
Section 52(3) of the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003

Question

Do you support the proposed purchase of the Isle of Ulva and associated holdings at Ulva Ferry on the mainland of the Isle of Mull on behalf of the community of North West Mull and Ulva?

Number of persons eligible to vote in the ballot	401
Number of persons eligible to vote who voted	255
Number of invalid (blank/spoilt) votes cast	1
Number of votes cast FOR the proposal	163
Number of votes cast AGAINST the proposal	91
Simon Clarke Electoral Reform Services For and on behalf of the appointed balloter	

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www.highland.gov.uk



**TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (SCOTLAND) ACT 1997
PLANNING (LISTED BUILDING AND CONSERVATION AREAS) (SCOTLAND) ACT 1997**

The applications listed below, along with plans and other documents submitted with them, may be examined online at <http://wam.highland.gov.uk> or electronically at your nearest Service Point. You can find your nearest Service Point via the following link https://www.highland.gov.uk/directory/16/a_to_z

Written comments should be made to the EPC at the contact details below within the time period indicated from the date of this notice. Anyone making a representation about this proposal should note that their letter or email will be disclosed to any individual or body who requests sight of representations in respect of this proposal.

Reference Number	Development	Address	Proposal Description
17/04569/LBC	Glencoe House Hotel, Glencoe, Ballachulish		Installation of external doors
17/05547/FUL	Land 140M SW of Narrach Bridge Crossing, Kinlochleven		Erection of steel portal frame building for training facilities
17/05670/LBC	Kiel House, Lochaline, Morvern, Oban		Removal of window and installation of door and steps
17/05699/FUL	Costa Coffee, Unit 3, 98 - 104 High Street, Fort William		To continue to place free standing tables, chairs and protective barriers on the pavement for customer use
17/05722/FUL	West Quarry Depot, Ballachulish		Erection of storage shed
17/05876/FUL	Tigh A Rudha, Onich, Fort William		Demolition of house and garage and erection of replacement house and studio apartment (amendment to planning permission 17/02990/FUL)
17/05919/FUL	Plot 4 75M North East of Glenfinnan Lodge, Glenfinnan		Erection of house, access track, parking and drainage
18/00025/FUL	Land 60M SE of White Sands, Tougal, Morar		Erection of Dwelling House
18/00068/FUL	Land 15M East of Millhouse, Drimnin		Change of use from steading to self catering accommodation, erection of extension

Time period for comments is 14 days, 17/04569/LBC & 17/05670/LBC is 21 days
ePlanning Centre, The Highland Council, Glenurquhart Road, INVERNESS IV3 5NX
Email: eplanning@highland.gov.uk

Argyll and Bute Council

DEVELOPMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE

ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL (DUNBEG VILLAGE ROADS) (20 MPH SPEED LIMIT) ORDER 2018

Argyll and Bute Council are proposing to reduce the speed limit to 20 mph on all Dunbeg Village Roads in the interests of road safety. The following roads are affected by this proposal: Castle Road, Lochnell Road, Dunstaffnage Castle Road (Kirk Road), Lorn Road, Etive Road, Jane Road, Meadow Road and Camus Road.

Full details of the proposals together with a Plan, and Statement of Reasons for proposing to make the Traffic Regulation Orders can be inspected by logging on to the Council's website at www.argyll-bute.gov.uk or viewed during normal office hours at the offices of:

- (i) Municipal Buildings, Albany Street, Oban;
- (ii) Argyll and Bute Council Offices, Kilmory, Lochgilphead.

Any person wishing to object to the proposals should send details of the grounds for objection in writing providing their name and address, to the Head of Governance and Law, Argyll and Bute Council, Kilmory, Lochgilphead, Argyll, PA31 8RT, by 9th February 2018.

Jim Smith, Head of Roads & Amenity Services, 1A Manse Brae, Lochgilphead, PA31 8RD

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Argyll and Bute Council

DEVELOPMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE

ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL (A848 TOBERMORY PIER - SALEN PIER ROAD) (TOBERMORY)(30 MPH SPEED LIMIT) (EXTENSION) ORDER 2018

Argyll and Bute Council proposes to consider a proposal to extend the current 30mph speed restriction on the A848 Tobermory Pier - Salen Pier Road on its southern approach to Tobermory by a length of 150 metres or thereby to allow the inclusion of the junction with Unclassified Road No. 186 Morvern Drive within the 30 mph speed restriction.

The proposed restriction is in the interests of road safety within the area. Full details of the proposal together with a plan, and a Statement of Reasons for proposing to make the Traffic Regulation Order can be inspected by logging on to the Council's website at www.argyll-bute.gov.uk or viewed during normal office hours at the following locations;

- (i) Argyll and Bute Council Offices, Breadalbane Street, Tobermory;
- (ii) Argyll and Bute Council Offices, Kilmory, Lochgilphead.

Any person wishing to object to the proposal should send details of the grounds for objection in writing providing their name and address, to the Head of Governance and Law, Argyll and Bute Council, Kilmory, Lochgilphead, Argyll, PA31 8RT, by Friday the 9th of February 2018.

Jim Smith, Head of Roads & Amenity Services, 1A Manse Brae, Lochgilphead, PA31 8RD

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2011 Nissan Navara DCI ASENTA 4X4 DCB 2.5L Diesel, Manual, Black, 88,865 Miles	Was £7,900+VAT £6,995+VAT
2009(09) Isuzu Rodeo RODEO DENVER TD LWB D/C 2.5L Diesel, Manual, Black, 96,097 Miles	£6,995+VAT
2008(08) Isuzu Rodeo RODEO DENVER TD LWB D/C 2.5L Diesel, Manual, Red, 87,776 Miles	£7,500+VAT
2012(12) Isuzu D-Max S/C INTERCOOLER TD 2.5L Diesel, Manual, White, 58,000 Miles	£9,500+VAT
2013(62) Isuzu D-Max YUKON D/C INTERCOOLER TD 2.5L Diesel, Manual, Blue, 103,823 Miles	£9,750+VAT

S&S Services, Heathfield, Ayr Tel: 01292 880080 / 07831 808702

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Source: Consumers' Choice '15, The Newspaper Society

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VW Polo S60 1.2 61 - 5 door h/back - 61,600 miles	£4,595
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Ford Focus Zetec (Auto) 63 - 5 door estate - 22,995 miles	£8,595
Ford Fiesta (Automatic) 62 - 5 door - 35,180 miles	£7,665
Nissan Note N-Tec 1.4 62 - 5 door h/back - 9,682 miles	£6,900
VX Astra Elite 1.6 13 - 5 door h/back - 13,000 miles	£7,900
Nissan Micra Visia 63 - 5 door hatchback - 20,781 miles	£5,300
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WINDSOR HOUSE, TOBERMORY

- Detached house
- 3 bedrooms/2 bathrooms/1 WC
- Walk-in condition
- Modern heating system
- Spacious lounge & kitchen
- EPC Rating - C71

OIRO £200,000

Windsor House is a modern three bedroom detached house located in a popular residential area in Tobermory, close to all amenities. It's accommodation is arranged over two floors, on entering the property you are welcomed into a roomy hallway. To your left, you will find a spacious and bright lounge which is neutrally decorated and benefits from windows at the front and back to let in plentiful natural light.

RIONNAIG NA MARA

- Detached House
- 4 Bedrooms/1 Bathroom/1 Shower Room
- Spacious and Practical Layout
- Walk-In Condition
- "Under Home Report Valuation"
- EPC Rating: C76

OIRO £245,000

Rionnraig Na Mara is a modern and spacious 4 bedroom home, centrally located in the pretty town of Tobermory on the Isle of Mull. This beautifully presented property comprises a well-proportioned lounge on the ground floor. The fitted kitchen is modern and functional, and an archway leads into the dining area complete with patio doors which bathe the room in natural light.

KINTORE, OBAN

- Spacious Detached House
- 4 bedrooms / 3 bathrooms
- Open plan lounge, kitchen and dining area
- Large garden
- Integrated double garage and private parking
- EPC Rating: C70

OIEO £400,000

A modern 4 bedroom detached house in a popular residential area close to the village of Benderloch. Built in 2006, Kintore is a bright and spacious house enjoying a rural position and views across fields and hills to the North. A small porch leads to the main open plan lounge/dining area which overlooks the front lawn and enjoys plentiful natural light from the floor-to-ceiling windows and patio doors and for those chilly nights there is a wood-burning stove.

HEADING INTO 2018 WITH OPTIMISM



so far in January compared to same period last year, averaging over 4 million visits per day. Obviously, that is nationwide but given 95% of peoples' property search starts online, this is a good indication that there are increasing numbers of buyers in the marketplace.

What a year it's been! Back in 2016 we had Brexit, a new prime minister and Donald Trump's election, so when it came to expecting the unexpected, 2017 had a lot to live up to. But then there was an unanticipated snap general election, the unexpected result, and a weakened government with a resilient Theresa May at the helm. Surely 2018 is going to be a lot less eventful.

Political and economic uncertainty have contributed to what has also been a rather difficult year for the housing market nationally, underpinned by a lack of stock, leaving many agents struggling to find homes to sell, while property prices have stayed broadly static, although there has been a divergence between house prices in different parts of the UK.

However, buyers appear to be eagerly starting their New Year property search, with early traffic data indicating a busy start to 2018, with Rightmove visits up by an average of over 9%

Additionally, according to the House Prices Index (HPI) in Scotland, the picture is positive; The average house price increased by 4.4% from 2016 to 2017, with an average time to sell of 55 days which is below the national average of 67 days. An encouraging statistic showing property prices are creeping up and selling more quickly in Scotland than the national average.

Despite all the doom and gloom on the news, at West we have noticed a marked upturn in the number of serious buyers in the market. Add to that an emerging market of landlords looking to expand their portfolios and active first-time buyers, 2018 looks to be a busy year for us. With a number of properties under offer already and qualified buyers on our waiting list, we would really like to speak to you! We have a fantastic offer for anyone looking to sell early this year. Interested? Give our lovely Sales Team a call on 01631 569 466.

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DIAMOND WEDDING
McLAUCHLAN - Ronnie and Joan née Marshall married at Logierait Parish Church, Ballinluig on January 18, 1958. Present address: Tulliemet, Ballachulish.

DEATHS
CAMPBELL - Peacefully at Lorn and Islands Hospital, Oban on January 10, 2018, aged 76 years, Allan Campbell, formerly of Bridge of Awe, beloved husband of the late Mary Grant. Fondly remembered by all his family and friends.

CAMPBELL - Peacefully, at the Kintyre Nursing Home, Campbeltown, on January 10, 2018, Marion Mary Campbell, aged 71 years, late of 10 Dunadd View, Kilmichael Glassary, Lochgilphead and formerly of Barra, cherished partner of Malcolm MacKenzie, beloved daughter of the late Duncan and Annie Campbell, much loved sister of Peggy, Neil, James, and the late Flora, Lena, Chrissie Ann and Chrissie Mary, and a dear aunt and cousin to all the family. Funeral service will be held at The Church of Our Lady Star of the Sea, Barra, on Saturday, January 20, 2018 at 11.00am, thereafter to Vatersay Cemetery. Sadly missed

GILLON - On January 4, 2018, very peacefully, at home in Corby, Eleanor, aged 102 years. Beloved wife of the late James, loving mum, granny and great-granny. Dear sister of Jean. She will be very sadly missed by all family and friends. Eleanor's committal will be held at the Edgar Newman Chapel, Kettering Crematorium on Wednesday January 24 at 10.00am followed by a service at St Ninian's Church, Beanfield Avenue, Corby at 11.00am. Family flowers only by request, donations if desired for the District Nurses at Woodsend Medical Centre may be placed in a collection box at the Church. All further enquiries please to Co-operative Funeralcare, Darley Dale Road, Corby 01536 203076.

HEAP - It is with great sadness, that we announce the peaceful passing of Robert, (Bob) at home, surrounded by love, on Friday, January 12, 2018. A wonderful and much loved husband of Isobel, a proud and adored father to Robert, Lorraine, Joe and the late Eddie, father-in-law to Louis, a special granddad to Sophie, Morgan and wee Buster, beloved brother, uncle and friend to so many. Funeral service will take place at Oban Parish Church, Glencruitten Road, Oban on Wednesday, January 24, 2018 at 1.00 p.m., thereafter to Pennyfuir Cemetery. Family flowers only. Donations in lieu if desired will be taken for the Macmillan Day Bed Unit at the Lorn and Islands Hospital, Oban and Argyll Beats Cardiovascular Disease (known as ABCD).

HOUGHTON - (Nee Gilchrist). Suddenly at home on Monday January 8, 2018, Muriel, aged 82 years. Much loved wife of David. Beloved mother of Linda and the late Michael and mother-in-law to Hugh. Dearly loved Grandma of Isla and cherished sister of Catriona and Bobby. Funeral service to which all family and friends are respectfully invited at Langbank Parish Church on Wednesday January 24, 2018 at 1.30pm, thereafter to Clydebank Crematorium, North Dalnotar. Family Flowers only.

JACK - Peacefully, in the tender care of Belford Hospital, on Tuesday January 9, 2018, Catherine Jack, aged 82 years. Beloved wife of the late George, loving mum of Susan and Karen, dear mother-in-law of David and a much-loved gran to Ellis and Hayley. Funeral Service will be held tomorrow (Friday), January 19, 2018 at 1pm in Kinlochleven Parish Church, thereafter to Kinlochmore Cemetery. Flowers welcome. All friends respectfully invited. Enquiries to John McLellan Funeral Directors, Tel 01397 702128.

JOHNSTON - Sadly, but peacefully, with her family by her side, on January 11, 2018, at Eadar Glinn, Oban, in her 94th year, Bridget MacAllister, beloved wife of the late George, devoted mother to James, Martha, Alexander and George, treasured nana to Laura. Will be sorely missed. RIP.

The Oban Times
 BIRTHS, MARRIAGES, DEATHS

MACDONALD - Peacefully, on the morning of his 80th birthday, having seen all his family, on Tuesday January 9, 2018, Ewen Macdonald, R.I.P. Loving husband of Dorothy, much-loved dad of Ewen, Kevin and Cynthia, also a dearly loved grandad and papa. Requiem Mass will be held today (Thursday) January 18, 2018 at 10am in St. Columba's R.C. Church, Culoden, thereafter to Cille Choirill Cemetery, Roy Bridge (Cortege to arrive approx. 1pm). All friends respectfully invited to the Church and Graveside. Family flowers only please. Donations, if desired, to St. Columba's Church Funds can be given at the door or forwarded to John McLellan Funeral Directors, Dudley Road, Fort William.

MACKILLIGIN - R.A.N. (Sandy), peacefully at home in Ardfern on January 14, 2018. Loved and respected by his families and many friends. Burial at Kilvaree at 12noon followed by a Celebration of his Life, at Craignish Village Hall on Friday January 26, 2018.

MACNEILL - Sheila McNeill, 91. Our beloved mother and grandmother passed away peacefully at Gortanvogie, Bowmore on December 28, 2017. Sheila was born in Glasgow on July 23, 1926 to James and Durie Cossar. Sheila had a career as a Police Officer in Lincolnshire, before marrying Neil Ban McNeill of Oransay. Together they farmed at Balerominmhor, Colonsay and Daill Farm, Islay, raising two children, Malcolm now sadly deceased, and Rachel. Sheila is survived by her brother Kenneth (London) her daughter Rachel, her granddaughter Islay Jade, great grandson Shane, and her fond nieces and nephews.

MACRAE - Peacefully at Buckreddan Care Home, Kilwinning on Friday January 5, 2018, Katie Mary MacRae, Ballygown, Isle of Mull, dear wife of the late Roddy, beloved mum of the late Mairi. Sadly missed by all the family. Funeral service was held on Tuesday January 16, 2018 at Salen Parish Church thereafter to Balure Cemetery.

MITCHELL - Peacefully, at the Lorn and Islands Hospital, Oban, on January 9, 2018, in his 85th year, John, much loved husband of Mary, father to Alison and Iain, grandpa, great grandpa, brother and uncle. Funeral service will take place at Muckairn Parish Church, Taynuilt, on Friday January 19, 2018 at 1.00 pm. Family flowers only please. Donations if desired, to ABCD.

NISBET - In Edinburgh on December 27, 2017, Andrew, formerly of Mid Argyll. Dear brother to Jean and the late John, loving uncle to Christine, Kenneth and Keeba and great uncle to Callum and Emma. Inserted by Jean Spencer, 1 Impasse des Fleurs, 19510 Maseret, France.

PAISLEY - Peacefully, in his 90th year, surrounded by his family on Monday, January 15, 2018, John Logue Paisley, devoted husband of 66 years to Marion, one in a million dad of Hazel and Kathryn, mischievous and loving papa of Lyana, Corale, Laura and John, devoted Papa John of Sophie, Erin and Callum, special father-in-law to William and the late Russell. Funeral Service will be held on Friday, January 26 2018 at 1pm in Duncansburgh-Macintosh Parish Church; thereafter to Kilmallie Cemetery. Family flowers only please. Donations, if desired, to Craig Nevis Surgery and Belford Hospital can be given at the door or forwarded to John McLellan Funeral Directors, Dudley Road, Fort William.

PALMER - Roberta (Gaga) (née Hutchison). Peacefully in the loving care of the Belford Hospital and in the arms of her family on Sunday January 14, 2018, loving wife of the late Bob and darling mum of Mary, Margaret, Roberta, Allan, John and Michael. Devoted Gaga to her 13 grandchildren and 11 great grandchildren. Forever in our hearts.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS
CLARK - The family of David Clark wish to thank all who came to join us at Kilmore Parish Church for his funeral. Their support was greatly appreciated. The family would also like to thank all those who supported David through the final stages of his illness. Heartfelt thanks must go to Connel Surgery, Oban Hospital Staff, Macmillan and

Marie Curie nurses who looked after him so well and the ladies of Connel Stores, who were so good to him. Special thanks must go to his carers, Nicola and Heather, who did so much to make his last months at home possible. The family will always be in their debt. Also thanks must go to Donald MacKinnon for such a caring and professional service. The family thanks you all.

FERGUSON - Flora. Marion, Kenneth and their families wish to thank most sincerely all relatives, friends, neighbours and Flora's ex work colleagues for the many kind expressions of sympathy extended to them in their recent bereavement. Special thanks to Rev Ian McFarlane, Oban and Rev John Ross, Fort William for their spiritual and practical support. Flora's family also wish to thank those who paid their last respects to her at the church and graveside.

MACDOUGALL - Irene, Winky, Heather and families would like to thank all relatives, friends, neighbours and the extended Oban community for their kind and thoughtful expressions of sympathy following the sudden and sad loss of Allan, dearest husband, dad and papa. We would also like to thank all those who came from near and far to pay their respects at the service and graveside. We would especially like to thank all staff of A&E department and ward B Lorn and Isles Hospital. Sincere thanks to the Rev Chris Fulcher for her uplifting and personal service and to our dear family friend Derek Melville (Hamilton) for his eulogy on his uncle Allan's interesting life. Grateful thanks to Ian MacInnes and all at D & A Munn for their caring and efficient service, to the Royal Hotel for excellent catering and the Moreen Gracie for beautiful floral tributes. The sum of £751.55 was collected for A.B.C.D. Finally to Allan's six grandsons for carrying out their papa's wish as pall bearers at the church and graveside. Well done boys we are proud of you all.

MACINTYRE - Angus (Innes). The family of the late Innes MacIntyre would like to thank all relatives and friends for all their kind messages of sympathy, and donations received for the benefit of The British Lung Foundation. Grateful thanks to all medical staff who cared for Innes during his illness. Special thanks to Father Andrew Barrett for his prayers, Father Donald John Cummings for his heartfelt eulogy, Maria MacLeod for the readings and Duncan and Allan for their kind care in attending to the funeral arrangements.

MACFARLANE - The family of the late Donald Peter MacFarlane would like to invite you to a Memorial Mass to celebrate his life. The service will be held at St Margaret's in Roy Bridge on Saturday January 27, 2018 at 11am followed by interment of his ashes in Cille Choirill.

MACLACHLAN - In loving memory of my sister-in-law and our dear aunt Ann, who passed away January 23, 2016 at Benhiant, Kilchoan. Fondly remembered - Inserted by Chrissie and family.

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MACMILLAN - Treasured memories of David (Here), beloved partner, son, brother and friend, who died January 21, 2016. Loved and remembered every day. - Janet, Dad, Margaret and families

POTTER - Precious memories of our youngest daughter and sister Jennifer Jane, tragically killed January 20, 2001, aged 17. Loved and missed. Mum and family xxx.

POTTER - Treasured memories of my dear granddaughter Jennifer Jane, who died tragically on January 20, 2001 aged 17 years. Loved and remembered always. - Nana x.

POTTER - Always remembering our niece and cousin Jennifer, who died on January 20, 2001. - Uncle Stephen, Auntie Kirsty, Findlay and Susannah.

POTTER - Fond memories of Jennifer who died tragically on January 20, 2001. - Aunty Irene and family.

CLARK - Treasured memories of our parents Angus Ross Clark, who we lost on January 19, 2009 and our mum Peggy (née Brown) who joined him on January 28, 2016. Missed more than words can say. Lives on forever within our hearts. Remembering also our Granpa Donald Brown who passed away January 19, 1973.

- Morag, Dugie, Donald and Gavin, Mike, Kay, Lorraine and James, Nicola, Paula, Ryan, Cooper, Taylor, Dara and Iona, Colin, Gregor and Ciaran.

CRAWFORD - In memory of Jessie, died January 20, 1995, a dear mother and gran. Sadly missed. - The family.

GALBRAITH - In loving memory of George of Drumfingal, Dervaig, Mull who died January 20, 1995. - Brenda and family.

HAY - Treasured memories of Jimmy, a beloved son, brother, brother-in-law and uncle who died January 19, 1998. Precious memories keep you near. As time unfolds another year. Forever loved. - Mum, Donald, Anthea, Iain, Milica, George, Doreen, Robert, Christopher, Melissa, Josh, Daniel and Rebecca.

LYNN - In loving memory of my dearest wife Winnifred who died January 23, 2016. Greatly missed and always in my thoughts. - Colin.

LYNN - Two years. In loving memory of my sister Win, who died January 23, 2016 after a long illness bravely borne. Always remembered. - Kate and family.

MACGILL - In loving memory of Nancy, who passed away January 18, 2015, beloved wife of the late Donald. Treasured memories of a loving, caring mum of Anne and Neil and dearly loved granny of Sophie and Donald. Sorely missed and always in our thoughts. - Anne and Rab, Neil and Jackie and Sophie and Donald.

MACIVER - Treasured memories of dear Duncan who died January 12, 2007. Remembered with love - Chrissie and Rob, Colin and Jocelyn, Lindsay and Kevin and families.

MACLACHLAN - Ann. In loving memory of our wonderful mum and granny who passed away January 23 2016. Your presence we miss Your memory we treasure Loving you always Forgetting you never. - Love Hugh, Rosemary, Nan, Alisdair and families, Kilchoan.

MACLACHLAN - In loving memory of my sister-in-law and our dear aunt Ann, who passed away January 23, 2016 at Benhiant, Kilchoan. Fondly remembered - Inserted by Chrissie and family.

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POTTER - Fond memories of Jennifer who died tragically on January 20, 2001. - Aunty Irene and family.

Obituary – Carl Reavey



IT is with deep sadness that we report the sudden death of our great friend and colleague, Carl Reavey.

Carl will be known to many of you personally but for those of you who didn't know him, Carl was the main voice and author of all things Bruichladdich - on our social media, web and PR channels. Just as importantly, he was a huge inspiration to many that passed through the gates of the distillery every year.

Carl was one of the best, one of the good guys who always had time for others.

Never selfish or too busy, always making his time available both in and out of work hours. Carl was totally committed to everything he did, with passion and conviction, he leaves an impossible hole to fill.

The Bruichladdich story was part of Carl's life for more than 20 years, even before it reopened in 2001. Along with his wife, Jan, they rebuilt the Port Charlotte Hotel just down the road from the distillery, before moving to become the editor of the local newspaper and then joining Bruichladdich full-time as our head of communications in 2012. Throughout this time Carl was heavily involved with

the development of Bruichladdich, both directly and indirectly. His influences are far-reaching.

Carl didn't have an 'off' button: he was fully vested in everything he did, from the many local charities and associations, to his constant cycling around Islay and beyond. I can't begin to count the number of discussions we had together, at work, over a dram once the phones stopped ringing, in the pub or around a dinner table. Total commitment I have never seen the like of before.

A bon viveur, happy to try any food offered to him, often foraged from the isle he and Jan have called home for more than 25 years. Enthusiasm is a word that will forever be associated with Carl - you simply couldn't keep him down, always enthusiastic, always smiling and always polite. Never a bad word to say about anyone.

We all feel a profound sense of loss at Bruichladdich.

We will miss him terribly but we are all the richer for being touched by his spirit.

Our hearts and thoughts are with Jan and Alistair, we hold you close.

Simon Coughlin

Thought for the week

THE BRITISH astronaut Major Tim Peake went to the International Space Station a couple of years ago.

During the trip, he had the opportunity to call his family from space, to speak to them on Christmas Eve. He dialled the number. When the phone was answered, he began by asking: 'Am I speaking to planet Earth?'

Unfortunately, he had called the wrong number. He was not talking to his family, but to Betty Barker, an elderly lady in West Sussex.

Hearing his question, she thought the caller was some drunken reveller looking for a nightclub called Planet Earth, so she hung up, not realising she had just received a call

from the International Space Station. Only the next day, when Betty's grandchildren saw Tim Peake's tweet apologising to whoever he had called by mistake, did the truth come out.

Mrs Barker's mistake was understandable, for she had no reason to expect a call from an astronaut on a space station that night. A message from space would be strange.

But many people would be equally surprised at the idea that God had a message for them. Like Mrs Barker, we might assume it was a wrong number or meant for someone else.

But the message of God's love and His welcome for all who place their trust in Him really is

intended for each one of us. It's not a wrong number, a crossed line or a case of mistaken identity.

John's gospel says of Jesus: 'To all who received him, to all who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God.'

It may be unusual to get a message from a space station, but the God from whom the universe originates has a message of love and welcome intended for all of us.

Rev Richard Baxter,
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Boxing coach Charlie Anderson, left, receives the donation from Kyle's mother Andrea, right, as father Kevin and brother Lee look on. Photograph: Iain Ferguson, the Write Image.

Kyle's family donate to Lochaber Phoenix Club

Boxing

THE FAMILY of 17-year-old Kyle Bruce, who died in a car crash last November, has donated £700 to Lochaber Phoenix Boxing Club.

The money was raised at a collection at Kyle's funeral.

The funeral ceremony was held in the boxing ring at the Nevis Centre as it was Kyle's wish to get into the boxing ring with his boxer brother Lee, who is a member of Lochaber Phoenix Boxing Club.

Kyle's parents Andrea and Kevin and his brother Lee presented the cheque to coach Charlie Anderson.

Lochaber club lotteries

Lottery numbers

THIS week's Fort William Golf Club lotto numbers were 6, 9 and 14.

There was no winner so the jackpot for the draw today (Thursday January 18) will be £900.

Numbers drawn in the Caol Regeneration lotto were 3, 7 and 20.

There were no winning tickets so next week's jackpot will be £1,300.

Caol Community Centre's bingo lotto numbers for this week were 5, 7 and 9. There were no winners so next week's jackpot will be £500.

Ballachulish Shinty Club's lottery numbers for this week were 3, 11 and 13.

One lucky winner, Duncan Wallace of Fallin, Stirling, won the £400 jackpot.

Next week's draw will have a prize of £200.

Spean Bridge Golf Club awards and annual meeting

Golf

SPEAN Bridge Golf Club will host its annual awards and annual general meeting on Saturday January 27.

There will be golfing action with a Texas scramble or stableford competition starting at 11am.

Refreshments will be served in the clubhouse between 2pm and 3pm with the AGM and awards starting at 3pm.

National recognition for Fort William judo coach

CLOCKING up more than 650 miles in her car every week to coach judo, Rebecca Maclean's commitment to the sport has earned her a nomination for a national award.

The 26-year-old from Fort William travels to Glasgow three days a week to coach in Springburn, Whiteinch and the east end of the city as part of the Judo Girls Rock programme and says it is her love of the sport that makes her arduous commutes worthwhile.

Her incredible dedication to the sport and the girls she coaches means she has been named as a finalist in the Young Coach of the Year category at the sportsScotland Year of Young People Awards 2018.

The awards showcase how sport can be used for positive social change and to celebrate the incredible dedication of the young people who give selflessly to sport in their local communities.

The five hours of travel time and near 14-hour days Rebecca puts in for each coaching day, as well as her professional preparation and delivery of each session, is the perfect example of that.

Bond

And the modest coach insists she doesn't think twice about continuing to make the long journeys from home, saying the bond she has built with the girls she coaches and her passion for the Judo Girls Rock programme would be too much of a wrench to break.

Judo

She said: 'I love Judo Girls Rock and I've noticed a big difference in myself since I started it. The sessions are being delivered in areas of deprivation and the programme is so good for the girls. I've seen such a massive difference in all of them.'

'I absolutely love it, that's why I keep doing it. I've grown such a bond with the girls and the project.'

Satisfying

'To see the difference in the girls while I've been working with them is so satisfying. That is the key to it.'

'To see other girls enjoying judo like I did when I was younger is brilliant. I've gained so much experience out of the programme as well. I think the programme will continue to grow.'

'We have girls who are talking about doing competitions and I did a session where all the mums and the sisters of the girls took part. Now we have mums talking about trying judo with their daughters.'

Rebecca was a skilled judoka herself and competed for Scotland up until the age of 20. But having moved to Edinburgh to compete, she became homesick and niggling injuries led her to return to Fort William.

After taking the decision to compete less and keen to remain involved in judo in some capacity, Rebecca started at Judo Girls Rock three years



Rebecca, far left, with a group of her students at a competition last year.

ago. Rebecca added: 'I started judo when I was 10. I left Fort William to live in Edinburgh to compete, then when I started competing less I got myself into coaching. I love the sport so I wanted to stay involved in it.'

'I got a bit homesick when I was living in Edinburgh and wanted to come home. I picked up a few injuries and missed my family. It was a culmination of

those things that helped me decide to move home. 'When I started coaching, I didn't really have any youth work experience.'

'But in the last few months I've got a job as a youth development officer.'

'I applied for that position after delivering Judo Girls Rock and looking at the connection between sport and youth work.'

I always thought sport would be the career path I would take.' Rebecca is in no doubt that her volunteering work has set her on the right path for a career in sport, with her new role in the community testament to that.

Rebecca will be attending the sportsScotland Year of Young People Awards 2018 on Friday January 26 at the Radisson Blu Hotel in Glasgow.

Fort flattened by nine-goal Forres

Fort William	1
Forres Mechanics	9
Highland League	

FORT William's hopes of their first points in the new year were emphatically dashed after a bruising defeat by an in-form Forres side.

Coming into this fixture, the visitors had been enjoying a five game winning streak and had no

intentions of letting that slide on Saturday.

The Fort, meanwhile, have struggled to compete in recent matches with one of their biggest challenges this season keeping their line-ups consistent and injury-free.

Rhythm

Forres didn't take long to settle back into the rhythm that has seen them climb up the league table in recent weeks, with Alan

Pollock coolly slotting home a penalty after five minutes.

Lee Fraser added the 'Can Cans' second of the match five minutes later before Robbie Duncanson got himself on the scoresheet just before the half hour mark.

Two goals in quick succession from Lee Fraser completed his hat-trick and sent the Fort in to the half-time break five goals down.

Football

Refreshed after the break, Fort William seemed to have steadied the ship and enjoyed a larger share of the action. Their hard work came to fruition when Kevin Ferguson, who recently re-signed for the club, hit the net on the 60th minute mark.

The Fort's celebrations were short lived, however, as Forres replied with two quick goals, from Graham Fraser and Ryan Stuart. A Lewis Campbell own goal added to the Fort defence's misery.

Lee Fraser's fourth goal of the game after 85 minutes rounded off Forres' scoring for the afternoon, meaning the home side narrowly avoided a third double-figure defeat of the season.

The win moves Forres up to fifth place in the Highland League, propelling them into contention for a top three finish to the season.

Fort William remain rooted to the bottom of the table with just a single point after failing to pick up a win so far this campaign.

The Fort continue their quest for points when they take on Deveronvale away from home this Saturday, January 20.



Fort goal scorer Kevin Ferguson evades the attention of Forres' Stuart Soane.

Photograph: Iain Ferguson, the Write Image.

Glasgow police exploit under-strength Lochaber

Police Scotland	26
Lochaber	10
BT West Division 3	

Rugby

IN THEIR first game of the new year, Lochaber Rugby Club's trip to Glasgow to take on Police Scotland Glasgow on Saturday ended in defeat.

An under strength squad made the trip, with the team forced to start the match with a man short.

Police Scotland Glasgow capitalised on the numbers advantage out wide and scored their first try of the afternoon almost immediately.

Shrugging off the poor start to the game, Lochaber came back into the tie with some well worked moves in the backs, but it was the home side who scored again next.

There were lots of errors creeping into the game from both sides in the slippery Glasgow conditions.

Lochaber got their first try of the afternoon when Christopher Simpson received the ball on the right wing around 30 metres out after some quick hands. He still had a lot of work to do and broke free of three tackles on his way to the try line.

At the start of the second half, Lochaber again conceded

early with PSG scoring almost straight from the kick off to extend their lead.

Lochaber then lost a player to injury with around 20 minutes left.

Despite being two men down Lochaber were next to score. With a maul being held up over the line Lochaber had the put in for a five metre scrum.

A couple of phases later, Simpson scored his second try after powering his way over from close range.

A Lochaber resurgence didn't quite materialise, however, and PSG exploited the numbers advantage and grabbed their fourth try of the game late on.

Despite the spirited performance from the visiting side in challenging circumstances, the final score ended 26-10 to Police Scotland Glasgow.

Lochaber scorers: Christopher Simpson, two tries.

The result means Lochaber remain in sixth place in the league, with Police Scotland Glasgow eight points behind in seventh.

This Saturday, Lochaber host Lanark at Banavie, with a 2pm kick-off.

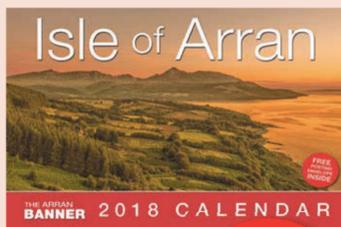


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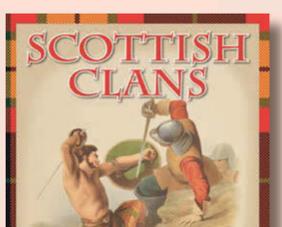
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SHINTY

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Best for all shinty news, results and fixtures

Honours even in Collie Cup clash

Red and Blacks 1 Whites 1

THE RED and Blacks and the Whites drew 1-1 as the players from Oban Camanachd, Lochside Rovers and Oban Camanachd U17S took the field in mixed teams to contest the John Collie Cup at Mossfield last Saturday.

Two 12-a-side teams lined up for this 1pm throw-up although absentees included Scott McKillop and Chrissie MacMillan who are recovering from injury and Daniel MacCuish who was unavailable.

Daniel MacVicar put the Whites ahead on 28 minutes when he sent the ball into the bottom corner of the net from the edge of the 'D'.

They didn't stay in front for long though as Craig MacDougall for the Red and Blacks took a ball from Willie Neilson before bundling it past Cameron Sutherland in the Whites' goal.

It stayed 1-1 until the break and the fact there was no scoring in the second half was mainly down to some bad luck and some terrific goalkeeping from Gavin Stobbart and Cameron Sutherland.

Craig MacDougall was unfortunate not to add to his goal as he hit the frame of the goal at least three times.

A rocket-shot from Lorne Dickie, from 40 yards out, was pulled out of the air with his caman by Gavin Stobbart, who also saved well with his leg from Daniel Cameron.

Scott MacMillan almost won it for the Red and Blacks near the end. MacMillan was pushed forward from his defensive role, with Willie Neilson dropping back, and his powerful, 20-yard shot was brilliantly saved by Cameron Sutherland with the ball then deflecting off the crossbar away to safety.

Daniel Sloss had a great game, whilst Evan MacLellan had an intriguing tussle with Aidan MacIntyre on the wing.

The only down-side was a hand injury on the half-hour mark suffered by Callum Kirsop. His cut hand required a hospital visit and left the Red and Blacks a player short for the final hour of the contest.

Oban Camanachd manager Ian Hay said afterwards: 'It was a decent game and a really good work-out for the players. Each team consisted of half the senior side and half the Lochside team and we saw some good performances. We didn't go to penalties as the draw was a fair result so the teams will share the John Collie Cup this year.'

'We now move on to weekly

training and we'll be testing and monitoring the players' fitness levels this year. It's not only important that the boys attend training each week but it's also vital that they do their own training, especially if they can't attend the club sessions.'

Pre-season shinty in Oban

Oban Camanachd, Oban Celtic and Lochside Rovers have confirmed their pre-season fixtures.

The fixtures for the diary are as follows:

Saturday January 27: Oban Celtic v Kilmory at Mossfield.

Saturday February 3: Oban Camanachd v Inveraray at Mossfield; Taynuilt v Oban Celtic at Taynuilt Sports Field.

Saturday February 10: Lochside Rovers v Glengarry at Ganavan; Oban Camanachd v Oban Celtic at Mossfield.

Saturday February 17: Lochside Rovers v Newtonmore seconds at Ganavan; Kyles Athletic v Oban Camanachd with the venue to be confirmed; Oban Celtic v Glengarry at Mossfield.

Saturday February 24: Kilmallie v Oban Camanachd at Canal Parks; Oban Celtic v Ballachulish at Mossfield, Robert Wylie Memorial Cup.

Lochside Rovers are looking to confirm a fixture for Saturday February 24.

Defensive woes for manager Hay

Oban Camanachd manager Ian Hay has a defensive headache ahead of the new shinty season.

Full back Gary McKerracher has said he is taking a year's break from the game, whilst defensive linchpin Scott McKillop is awaiting a scan on his injured knee.

Garry Lord will miss the pre-season and possibly the first game of the season as he will be on holiday, whilst Scott MacMillan has a suspension to serve.

Chrissy MacMillan, who is expected to make the step up from Lochside, is on the road to recovery from his injury but isn't ready yet.

Matt Rippon, Willie Neilson and Daniel Cameron could step in at the back, whilst Daniel Sloss will get his chance to impress during pre-season matches.

Craig MacDougall and Evan MacLellan are two others who are expected to be rewarded for their performances for Lochside last season with a senior call up in 2018.



Oban Camanachd's Red and Blacks and White teams line-up before last Saturday's John Collie Cup match at Mossfield. Photograph: Kevin McGlynn.



Crossal & Co won the John MacKinnon Memorial Sixes tournament hosted by Skye Camanachd. Photograph: Moreen Pringle.

John MacKinnon Memorial Sixes

Crossal & Co were the winners when Skye Camanachd hosted the fifth John MacKinnon Memorial Sixes at the Portree High School astro pitch on Saturday January 6.

The event remembers Skye Camanachd vice president John MacKinnon who died in December 2011 as the result of an accident at work. Six teams took part in the tournament, played on a round-robin format, ahead of the semi-finals, on a dry but cold day in Portree.

Grantie's Mob finished the league section top of the pile, four points ahead of second placed PG Tips. Third-placed Crossal & Co edged out North End in fourth on goal difference.

This meant Morrisons & Co and an Achmore side which has played in all five tournaments, both dropped out.

The four player of the tournament awards, selected by the participating teams, were handed out at a special event at the Skye Camanachd club house afterwards.

Four goal Abby MacLean was named both ladies and overall player of the tournament. Her Grantie's Mob team mate Jamie Gannon was also amongst the prizes as the keeper took the Over 40s player of the tournament prize.

The U17 player of the tournament was William MacKinnon from Crossal & Co.

Skye Camanachd chairman Douglas MacDougall extended special thanks to tournament sponsors M2Motors and the Castle Restaurant, Inverness.

Skye Camanachd AGM

The Skye Camanachd Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO) annual general meeting will take place at Skye Camanachd Clubhouse on Saturday January 20.

The meeting starts at 2.30pm with the Skye Camanachd Social Club AGM taking place afterwards.

The meeting will be told that Vattenfall, one of Europe's major producers and retailers of electricity and heat, has

confirmed its continued sponsorship of the island club.

The club hopes to arrange the annual Ewen Morrison Memorial Cup match in the usual north v south format prior to the AGMs, with throw-up at noon.

Bute awards

Bute held their annual player of the year awards on Saturday January 6.

Scott Harvey collected the first team manager's award, whilst the first team players' player of the year was shared between Franco Devlin and James Craig.

The second team manager's award was shared between Andrew McLachlan and Steven Dunn with the second team players' player of the year going to William Boag. Young player of the year went to Craig Fisher.

Bute opted to take a step down to play in Marine Harvest South Division 1 last season so they could re-build their squad and introduce some younger players. Therefore there was a degree of satisfaction at the island club that so many of their young players were recognised for their contribution.

Fort William pre-season games

Fort William have confirmed their first team pre-season programme with four games against top flight opposition.

The Fort welcome Marine Harvest Premiership champions Kinlochshiel to An Aird on Saturday January 27 and they are looking to confirm a friendly fixture for the week after.

Fort William then host Tulloch Homes Camanachd Cup finalists Lovat on Saturday February 10 before travelling to Skye the week after.

Fort William complete their preparations for their Marine Harvest National Division campaign with the Annual Drew Ferguson Memorial Cup match against Kyles Athletic at An Aird on Saturday February 24.

The club has already started training, meeting at An Aird on Tuesday evenings and at the Lochaber High School astro pitch on Thursday evenings.

Ballachulish inter-club match

Ballachulish shinty players will gather at The Jubilee Park to play an inter-club match on Saturday January 20.

The match, postponed from Saturday January 2 because of an unplayable pitch, is open to anyone including new players as well as former players.

The match starts at noon with all players gathering at least 30 minutes earlier.

The teams will be decided on the day for what is usually a well-attended occasion.

Ballachulish seeks new recruits

Ballachulish are the latest shinty club to advertise for new shinty players ahead of the start of the shinty season.

Aberdour, Boleskine, Glasgow Mid Argyll, Glenorchy and Kyles Athletic, particularly for their second team, are all looking to boost their squad numbers.

Beaulie marks 125th anniversary

Beaulie Shinty Club has released a book to mark its 125th anniversary.

Written by club secretary and Camanachd Association director Steven MacKenzie, the book focuses on the club's fortunes between 1992 and 2017, using archive photos and recollections from players and committee members to recall the ups and the downs over this period.

The book features sketches by renowned author and illustrator Mairi Hedderwick, archive images from photographer Neil G Paterson and shinty historian Dr Hugh Dan MacLennan amongst others.

The club is also indebted to Tom Smith from design studio Lateral North who, despite being a Lovat man, set aside any personal differences and designed a superb book that will delight Beaulie fans and shinty supporters. Copies of the book are available from



Daniel Sloss and Daniel MacVicar in action during the John Collie Cup clash at Mossfield. Photograph: Kevin McGlynn.

Steven, priced £10. He can be contacted on steven.mackenzie98@aberdeen.ac.uk or on 07968 437655.

Kinlochshiel AGM

Kinlochshiel will hold its annual general meeting in Dornie Hall on Friday January 19.

The meeting starts at 7.30pm and the club will reflect on a successful season when they lifted the Marine Harvest Premiership title for the first time.

There will be changes off the field as stalwarts Albert Loades and John MacDougall both stepped down from their director roles.

The club has also been holding taster sessions for ladies players at the Plockton High School astro pitch.

The sessions are aimed at players aged over 12 years and the initial gathering last Saturday attracted 26 ladies. The next session takes place on Tuesday January 23 between 7pm and 8.30pm.

There will also be a session on Saturday February 3 between 11am and 1pm.

The club has been working hard to establish a ladies team. Based on the number of women who registered an interest to play for Kinlochshiel Ladies

and, with support and guidance from Katie Drain from the Camanachd Association, the club intends to register a team for inclusion in the Women's Camanachd Association Marine Harvest North Division 2 as well as another team into the Development League for the upcoming shinty season.

WCA workshop

The Womens Camanachd Association held a club officer training workshop at the Nevis Centre, Fort William, on Sunday January 14.

The workshop was specifically aimed at team managers, coaches, club captains, secretaries and anyone else involved in the organisational side of the game.

The workshop provided all the knowledge and advice required to help run and organise the administrative side of a club.

It explained the relevant WCA procedures, rules and bylaws for 2018 including player registration, contacting the opposition and referee, reporting results, re-scheduling fixtures and setting up pitches.

The WCA appealed for all clubs to be represented so that individual roles within clubs and the WCA could be explained.



Daniel Sloss shields the ball from Aidan MacIntyre during the John Collie Cup match. Photograph: Kevin McGlynn.



Beaulie Shinty Club award winners, left to right, William Boag, Craig Fisher, Franco Devlin, James Craig, Scott Harvey, Andrew McLachlan and chairman Barry Martin. Missing is Steven Dunn.

Saints ready to move up a gear to take on Rolls Royce in Scottish Cup

East Kilbride Rolls Royce
Oban Saints
Scottish Cup - 5th Round

WITH their recent fourth round re-play victory over old rivals Greenock High School Former Pupils, Saints ensured their Scottish Amateur Cup adventure continues for another round.

Unfortunately, though, their fifth-round tie against East Kilbride Rolls Royce was called off last Saturday as The Murray Recreation Centre pitch was frozen.

The game has been re-scheduled for this Saturday, January 20, with the

East Kilbride outfit trying to book a 3G pitch to make sure the match goes ahead.

The teams will draw swords twice more this season when they face each other in the Scottish Amateur Football League Premier Division.

Saints' last visit to East Kilbride to face the 'Rolly' in May 2016 ended in a 3-1 Saints victory which consigned the home side to a second relegation in four seasons. First half goals from Craig Campbell and Scott Maitland were added to by Dean Smith, effectively killing off the match after 12 second half minutes.

The 'Rolly', however, battled on and earned a deserved consolation

14 minutes from full-time through substitute Andrew Woods.

The 'Rolly's' latest spell in Premier Division One lasted just one season as a successful league campaign secured an immediate return to the top flight when they finished runners-up to champions Alba Thistle.

Back in the Premier Division for the 2017-18 season, the 'Rolly' endured a difficult start with back to back defeats against two of this season's title contenders Goldenhill and Motherwell Thistle.

However, a local derby share of the points with 2015-16 champions East Kilbride FC Amateurs kick started their campaign. They took maximum points from the next two fixtures away at Hillington and Inverlyde which sees them currently in seventh place in the league table with seven points, one point better off than eighth-placed Saints and with one game less played.

The 'Rolly's' slow start to the season cost them any chance of progression in the Scottish Amateur Football League Centenary Cup, finishing in third place in Group Section South 3 behind Premier Division One Champions Alba Thistle and local rivals Clarendon.

The early stages of the major cup competitions coincided with the 'Rolly's' return to form which now sees them paired with Saints in the Scottish Amateur Cup fifth round. After receiving a first round bye, the 'Rolly' put 12 past newly formed Newmains Hammers of Strathclyde Saturday Morning Amateur Football League Division 1B, before a comfortable away win at Stirling and District Amateur Football Association Division 1A leaders Braehead.

In the fourth round, it was an all-Scottish Amateur Football League clash against reigning Premier Division Champions St Joseph's, with the 'Rolly' raising a few eyebrows with an



Myles McAuley is congratulated by his teammates after scoring the winner against Falkirk in the third round replay at Glencruitten. Report and photos: Derek Black.



Former Dumbarton striker Ally McKerracher opened the scoring against Greenock HSFP in the fourth round replay.

impressive 2-1 away win after a 2-2 home draw in East Kilbride.

Saints started their Scottish Cup campaign with a 4-0 home win over Mauchline United in the first round thanks to goals from Craig MacEwan (3) and Shaun MacIver.

This was followed by a convincing 6-0 home win against Plains in round two. Donald Campbell (3), Fraser MacFarlane, Scott Maitland and Paul Carmichael were on target for the Oban side.

It took Saints two hard games to get past an impressive Falkirk side in round three, the first game ending in a 3-3 draw at Alva Academy. Donald

Campbell (2) and Craig MacEwan were Saints' scorers. The replay in Oban a week later saw Saints edge through 3-2 thanks to goals from Craig MacEwan, Willie Gemmell and Myles McAuley.

The D & K Lafferty-sponsored Oban side then took on old rivals Greenock High School in the fourth round and came away with a creditable 2-2 draw from Battery Park with a depleted squad.

Bad weather and the festive break meant the replay didn't take place until Saturday January 6 when manager Alex Craik had a full squad of players to choose from.

Football

The Oban side turned in a top class performance to win 2-0 thanks to goals from Ally McKerracher and Donald Campbell.

Unlike almost every other cup competition in amateur football the Scottish Amateur Cup includes replays, therefore a re-match will follow at Glencruitten in seven days if East Kilbride and Saints cannot be separated after 90 minutes.

Manager Alex Craik hopes to have a full squad to choose from for this important cup tie.

Sports hall athletics in Lochgilphead Athletics

MID ARGYLL Athletics Club will host its annual sports hall athletics competition on Sunday January 21 at Lochgilphead Joint Campus. Events will begin at noon, with entries accepted from 11.30am. There will be a number of events for children aged under seven to under 17.

Athletes successful at the competition will qualify for the Argyll final at Atlantis Leisure, Oban, on Sunday March 18.

Events on the day include three and six lap time trials, high jump, standing long and triple jumps and speed bounce. Under sevens through to under 11s can compete in javelin, with shot putt available for under 13s up to under 17s.

Entry fees are £2 per competitor and £5 for families of three or more. For information email Bill MacCallum at w_maccallum@hotmail.com.

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Members of Oban Kyokushinkai Karate Club who recently passed grading tests. Back row, left to right, Charlie McLaughlin, Donald Robertson and Tobiasz Fituch. Front: Leona McLaughlin, Alan Boase, Stanislaw Kupczak, Franek Kupczak, Florence Hill and Lily Walsh.

MARTIAL ARTS WITH IAIN RODGER

Kyokushinkai Karate
THE CLUBS are back to normal after the festive holidays.

Club members who passed grading tests in December were presented with their certificates.

Kyu grades (coloured belt grades) were awarded to the following:
10th Kyu: Stanislaw Kupczak.
8th Kyu: Lily Walsh, Florence Hill, Tobiasz Fituch, Sean McQuade.
7th Kyu: Alan Boase.
5th Kyu: Donald Robertson.
1st Kyu: Charlie McLaughlin.

New members are always welcome, so if karate is something you want to try, come along and try it out. The minimum age for this class is eight years with no upper limit.

Children train on a Thursday from 6-7pm with adults on the same night from 7-8:30pm.

Anyone interested in learning Kyokushinkai Karate should contact Iain Rodger on 07584 166542 or iain@ikku.co.uk

Kickboxing
Club members are working hard for

grading tests, including students attempting black belt grades. A report on this will be in the next article.

The club is taking on beginners with anyone of school age welcome.

In addition to the normal classes, there is a monthly fun session.

For club details contact Wullie Rodger on shihanwill@gmail.com or 07588 513618.

Shukokai Karate
Classes are back to normal this week, with beginners welcome.

Contact Kenny Gray on kenni.gray@btinternet.com for more details.

BJJ
Oban BJJ classes are back to normal after a break over the festive period.

The academy has a 12-week beginners' course every Friday at 7.30pm as well as normal classes every other week day at 7.30pm.

For more information about BJJ and MMA classes, contact club coach Iain (Coogie) Potter on coogiepots@gmail.com.

SPOT THE SHINTY BALL THIS WEEK'S JACKPOT £3350

LAST WEEK'S SHINTY BALL WAS HERE. . .



This week's nearest the ball winners, who each receive £25 are:

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If you wish to have more attempts, you must enter on separate coupons.

Easy to enter

Cut out your completed coupon and put your entry plus £1 per 20 attempts into a sealed envelope and post it to "Spot the Shinty Ball" Competition, The Oban Times, PO Box 1, Oban, Argyll PA34 4HB by 12noon Tuesday. No refunds will be given for entries received after the deadline. You may hand it into The Oban Times Head Office, Lochavullin, Oban by the same time. Otherwise all entries must be posted.

Competition rules

No responsibility will be accepted for entries which are delayed, mislaid or lost, and proof of posting cannot be accepted as proof of delivery.

The Company's decision is final on all matters relating to the

game starts with a jackpot of £500 and will increase by £50 per week until it is won outright. To win the jackpot, the centre of your cross must be in the exact centre of the ball. If the crosses overlap the entry will be void.

If no correct entry is received, two 'near miss' prizes of £25 will be awarded. When the jackpot is won, no other prizes will be awarded that week.

competition and no correspondence will be entered into. The final decision rests with the Company.

In the event of more than one correct entry, the jackpot will be shared equally between all winning entries. Any decision regarding the awarding of a prize is entirely at the discretion of the Company.

The Company reserves the right to declare the competition null and void at any time, subject to its discretion and to make full refund of the price of the coupon to any person who has entered the competition at that time.

Employees of Wyvex Media, their immediate relatives and any person otherwise connected with the competition are ineligible to enter.

Please remember to enclose £1 for 20 crosses. The maximum number of attempts on this coupon is 20, but you may enter on separate coupons as many times as you wish. No photocopies allowed. You agree to abide by the rules. How to enter: Mark your crosses using a ballpoint pen. Twenty crosses may be put on this coupon for £1. Send to 'Spot the Shinty Ball' Competition, The Oban Times, P.O. Box 1, Oban PA34 4HB



Please tape your £1 coin here (only if posting)

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Both teams observe a minute's silence before Saturday's game in memory of former Oban Lorne captain Euan Wilson who died recently. Photographs: Stephen Lawson.

Two late tries see Lorne go down to Annan

Oban Lorne	15
Annan	26
BT West Division One	

OBAN LORNE welcomed mid-table Annan RFC to Glencruitten on Saturday for the first meeting of the sides this season.

A minute's silence was observed prior to Saturday's fixture in memory of former Oban Lorne captain Euan Wilson who tragically passed away in New Zealand at the turn of the year. Euan was a popular figure at the club, captaining the team in the

2007/2008 season. The thoughts of everyone at Oban Lorne are with Euan's wife Stefani and the rest of their family.

Oban Lorne RFC will be involved in any memorial events in memory of Euan and will inform members of any such events.

Coach Corrie Louw made a few changes from last week's promising performance at league leaders Allan Glens with props Andrew Johnston and Daniel Kemp coming into the starting XV.

There was also a return for second row Jack Strachan, while Oban High School teacher Matt Walker made his debut in the back row.

The only change to the backline was the return of experienced full back David McLaughlin.

It was a scrappy start to the game with both teams trying too hard at times to test the opposition defence. Knock-on after knock-on in the opening exchanges resulting from the damp conditions contributed to a stop, start first few minutes.

Oban were dealt an early blow after five minutes with the



Callum MacLachlan barges his way over the line to score Oban's second try.

sin-binning of back row Matt Walker. Walker's dismissal could be at best be described as 'soft' with the referee deeming a perfectly executed tackle too dangerous resulting in Oban playing with 14 men for 10 minutes.

Walker's absence in the Oban defence almost definitely resulted in Annan's first try of the game as their impressive inside centre Callaghan made a good break from the 22 to touch down over the line. 5-0 to Annan after 10 minutes.

The home side responded well from the early set backs and were rewarded with a second try in two games from Radostin Maksimov. Oban's hooker finished well to put Oban 7-5 ahead. The conversion was well taken by Finlay Carmichael.

Oban were full of confidence at this stage and their dominance showed with another try, this time from powerful winger Callum MacLachlan who finished from close range. 12-5 to Oban.

The score remained the same at half time.

Both sides were lucky to keep 15 men on the pitch after some sloppy tackles.

An increasingly nervous performance from the referee prevented any further yellow cards being given.

Annan had the better start of the second half with their impressive backline moving the ball well. The away side responded with a try from Copeland on 50 minutes to tie the score at 12-12.

Oban hit back shortly after with a Carmichael penalty to regain a 15-12 lead.

Annan continued to attack well and sustained a long period of pressure on the Oban tryline. The men in green stood firm though and cleared their lines.

With around 20 minutes remaining, Oban found themselves in some great field positions to put Annan under



Radi Maksimov scores Oban's first try.

pressure. Attack after attack was launched at the tryline to no reward as Annan turned the ball over on a couple of occasions and kicked clear.

Going into the closing stages, Oban were awarded a penalty within scoring distance after a horrendous challenge on hooker Maksimov. After a period of 'handbags' between the players the referee forgot his prior decision and awarded Annan a scrum - much to the frustration of the Oban players and crowd.

After missing the chance of potentially going 18-12 in front, Oban were now on the backfoot with Annan gaining most of the possession in the home side's half.

After a long period of pressure, Annan scored their third try of the day with Alex Halliday crossing with five minutes remaining. 12-17 to the visitors.

Oban failed to hit back in the last five minutes and were dealt another blow when Richard MacKay was sin binned for an off-the-ball offence.

Rugby

Despite MacKay being punched in the face by a member of the opposition, the referee deemed MacKay had acted in an inappropriate manner and would spend the remainder of the game on the sidelines.

Annan attacked again, with Halliday scoring with the last play of the game. Full time 24-15 to Annan.

This was definitely a missed opportunity for Oban Lorne who only have themselves to blame for letting the visitors back into the game so late on, despite some of the controversial calls that went against them.

Despite the loss, there are positive signs the men in green are moving in the right direction.

Oban turn their attention to this Saturday's game away to fellow strugglers Irvine RFC.

This is a must win for both sides who are hoping to pull themselves away from the foot of the table.



Craig Wright side-steps this Annan defender.



Stephen Povey powers his way through the Annan defence.

Saints' senior team up for the cups

Football

THE WINNERS of the Oban Saints v East Kilbride Rolls Royce game have been given a tough away draw to Ayrshire Premier League outfit Kilbride Thistle from Saltcoats in the sixth round of the Scottish Cup. The tie is due to be played on Saturday February 3.

The Oban side have been drawn at home to Caledonian League team Woodhall Thistle from Holytown in the fifth round of the West of Scotland Cup. This game is scheduled for Saturday January 27 at Glencruitten.

Argyll rivals Lochgilhead Red Star are the opponents in the second round of the Jimmy Marshall Trophy. This game will be played at Oban's community pitch at the end of January.

Scottish Amateur FL results and fixtures

LAST Saturday's results: Scottish Amateur Cup fifth round - East Kilbride Rolls Royce v Oban Saints, postponed; Premier Division One - Campbeltown Pupils 0, Neilston 3; Premier Division Two - FC Argyll 7, Tarbert 1; Lochgilhead Red Star 1, Port Glasgow OBU 1.

This Saturday's fixtures: Scottish Amateur Cup fifth round - East Kilbride Rolls Royce v Oban Saints; Premier Division One - Port Glasgow v Campbeltown Pupils; Premier Division Two - Castlemilk v Lochgilhead Red Star; Tarbert v Duncanrig.

Saints' youth team results and fixtures

LAST weekend's results: Under 13s 4, Broomhill 2. Kyle Cooper (2), Ruairidh Buchanan and Cooper MacIntyre were Saints' goalscorers. Under 14s, no game; Under 15s 12, Busby 0. Scoring for Saints were Connor Moore (5), Toby MacFarlane Barrow (2), Ryan Barclay (2), James Beaton (2) and Kieron Lopez. Drumchapel United 1, Under 16s 1. On target for Saints was Euan Finlay. Campbeltown Pupils 1, Under 17s 9. Saints goalscorers were Cammy Kerr (4), Keir MacLean (2), Kenneth Black, Rory Dowd and Nathan Allan.

This weekend's fixtures: Scottish Cup - Lasswade v Under 13s; League - Under 14s v Dumbarton Riverside; Under 15s v no game; Regional Cup - Under 16s v North Kelvin; Regional Cup - Under 17s v Syngenta.

No game for ladies

OBAN LORNE Ladies had no game on Sunday as Ardrossan failed to raise a team for the National 2 fixture. The Green Army are back in action this Sunday as they travel to face their nearest challengers Grangemouth RFC.

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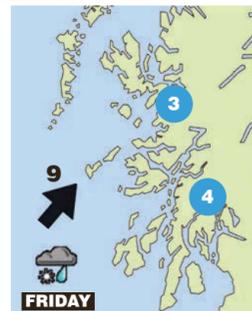
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WEATHER

Thursday	Sleet and snow Winds moderate West North Westerly Temperatures 1°C to 4°C.
Friday	Sleet and snow showers Winds light South Westerly Temperatures 0°C to 4°C.
Weekend Outlook	Sunny on Saturday Heavy rain on Sunday Winds moderate North Westerly Temperatures -1°C to 5°C.



Stop Press: New pontoons at Ulva Ferry and visitor moorings installed at Lochaline by North West Marine Ltd

TIDAL INFORMATION
Tide tables for Oban during the week from Thursday January 18, 2018 are listed below with differences for major ports listed on the right. All times are GMT (add one hour BST)

Date	am				pm			
Thur	00.34	1.1	06.32	4.0	12.52	1.3	18.43	3.8
Fri	01.08	1.1	07.06	4.0	13.27	1.3	19.14	3.8
Sat	01.38	1.2	07.38	3.9	14.00	1.3	19.43	3.7
Sun	02.06	1.2	08.09	3.8	14.30	1.4	20.13	3.6
Mon	02.34	1.3	08.41	3.7	15.02	1.5	20.47	3.5
Tues	03.09	1.4	09.19	3.6	15.43	1.6	21.28	3.3
Wed	03.54	1.5	10.07	3.4	16.38	1.7	22.18	3.2

Tidal Constants: (Add or deduct from High Water at Oban)

Ardrishaig	-5.35	Mallaig	+0.25
Campbeltown	-5.30	Portree	+0.55
Crinan	-0.47	Tobermory	+0.16
Islay Port Ellen	2.00	Dover	+5.30
Lochboisdale	+0.30		

Ferry Crossings/Sea States

Oban to Barra/South Uist	Moderate
Oban to Coll/Tiree	Moderate
Kennacraig to Islay	Moderate

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Lochaber fisheries experts welcome report on sea lice

MARK ENTWISTLE
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FISHERIES experts in Lochaber say the publication of a hard-hitting scientific report proves Scotland is no different from other countries when it comes to salmon farm pests killing thousands of wild fish.

Commissioned by Salmon and Trout Conservation Scotland (S&TC Scotland), the report was compiled by the Norwegian Institute of Nature Studies – Norway's leading institution for applied ecological research – and examines all available and up-to-date research on the impact of sea lice from salmon farms.

The scientists concluded the combined results from more than 100 scientific studies provided evidence of a 'general and pervasive negative effect' of sea lice on salmon and sea trout populations in intensively farmed areas of Ireland, Norway and Scotland.

Welcoming the report, S&TC Scotland director Andrew Graham-Stewart said the study made it clear the Scottish salmon farming industry would be facing the same problems as that of other countries.

'This report substantiates our view that it would be very odd indeed if the Scottish situation was markedly different to elsewhere,' he said.

'We do, after all, have the same sea lice, which all too often Scottish salmon farm operators are incapable of keeping under control, and the same wild fish.' Scotland has more than 250 salmon farms and, at the last

count, Lochaber had 23, with more than another dozen on Skye.

Dr Diane Baum, biologist with the Torlundy-based Lochaber Fisheries Trust, which was set up more than 20 years ago to monitor and protect populations of native wild fish in the region, agrees the institute's report lends weight to the arguments against current salmon farming practices.

'The report is not so much new evidence as an accumulative view pulling together international studies. A lot of research has been done in Norway and Ireland but Scotland has been lagging behind,' she told the *Lochaber Times*.

The review of more than 100 scientific papers found that up to 50,000 wild salmon die as a result of the parasites in Norway.

Dr Baum said Norway and Ireland had found fish farming was having an effect on wild fish populations.

'We have not had the resources or effort here in Scotland put into this issue, but there is no reason to think Scotland would be any different from Norway and Ireland,' she said.

Dr Baum hopes this spring's upcoming Holyrood parliamentary inquiry into fish farming practices will make a difference.

'This issue definitely needs to be looked at. Change needs to come from the top because, at the moment, no-one seems to want to take responsibility for dealing with it,' she said.

However, Scott Landsburgh, chief executive of the Scottish Salmon Producers' Organisation, said it was a stretch to

describe the report as new and claimed much of it was existing research that had been rewritten.

'We are as aware as S&TC of the state of wild salmon stocks and have consistently pointed out scientific research has suggested any impact of sea lice from farms on wild populations is minimal,' he said.

'It is interesting, however, that there is no acknowledgment of the impact of climate change, which is undoubtedly having an effect on wild and farmed fish health.'

Mr Landsburgh's comments were echoed by Steve Bracken, business support manager at Marine Harvest Scotland, who said salmon and sea trout were also declining in areas of Scotland where there are no salmon farms.

'This suggests considerably more research needs to be carried out on the causes, which are most likely linked to climate change and a lack of available food for wild salmon at sea,' said Mr Bracken.

Highlands and Islands Green Party MSP John Finnie said the Norwegian study would be considered when the Scottish Parliament's Rural Economy and Connectivity Committee, on which he sits, opens its inquiry later this year.

'While recognising the employment fish farming has brought to many rural areas, and the need to have sustainable local sources of food, the Scottish Green Party supports a moratorium on any further fish-farm developments pending the outcome of this inquiry,' he said.



Nevis Bakery production manager Robert Lawrie assesses a fresh batch of the award-winning bridies. IF F03 Nevis Bridie 01 Photograph: Iain Ferguson, the Write Image.

Bakery's bridies are world's best

NEVIS Bakery is on top of the world after winning a top prize at the annual World Championship Scotch Pie Awards last week.

Following a busy day of judging with more than 80 butchers and bakers entering more than 400 pies, sausage rolls and bridies into the competition in Cumbernauld, the Fort William-based bakery impressed the judges with its mince bridie and were the only bakery presented with

the diamond award in the bridie category. The bakery also won a gold award for its beef and onion pie in the football pie category, which it serves to Fort William FC supporters, and claimed a bronze award for its Aberdeen Angus steak pie in the steak pie category.

The awards, presented by TV presenter Carol Smillie, have been running for 19 years and celebrate the best of Scottish baked goods.

INSIDE YOUR LOCHABER TIMES THIS WEEK

Panto success

THERE were laughs galore and plenty of talent on show when students from West Highland College UHI staged their panto in the Nevis Centre.

Full story and photographs – page two.

Job opportunities

HEALTH and social care providers across Lochaber are holding a series of events designed to give residents an update on job opportunities within the local care-at-home sector.

Full story page two.

Budget woes

THE CHAIRMAN of Highland Council's Lochaber Area Committee says a way must be found to avoid budget cuts in services having a disproportionate impact on Lochaber residents.

Full story – page three.

Funding probe

SPEAN Bridge community councillors have agreed to seek an investigation by the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman into Highland Council's discretionary ward funding.

Full story – page five.

Award finalist

A JUDO coach from Fort William has been named as a finalist in the Young Coach of the Year category at the sportsotland Year of Young People Awards 2018.

Full story – page 26.



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Figures prompt fresh calls for A82 upgrade

MORE accidents have occurred on the A82 than on the A9 in the past six years, prompting fresh calls for investment.

Figures released this week, following a Freedom of Information request, show 530 accidents occurred on the A82 between 2012 and mid-2017 – 24 more than on the A9. Although the A82 had more serious and slight accidents than the A9, there were 27 fatal accidents on the A82 last year compared to 30 on the A9.

Stewart MacLean, of the A82 Partnership, said: 'These statistics will come as no surprise to those who commute and use the road and are regularly impacted by the accident rate and death toll.'

'The £3 billion investment in the A9 and the paltry sums spent on the A82 bear no comparison, despite the high traffic and accident rate.'

Work is currently ongoing to dual the A9, costing around £3 billion.

As for the A82, it is claimed that £98m has been invested by the Scottish Government in maintenance since 2007, as well as the recent completion of the £5m Crianlarich bypass and the £9m Pulpit Rock viaduct at Loch Lomond.

Mc MacLean continued: 'We are calling for significant investment to be made in a reasonable timescale. Especially in our priority areas – Tarbet to Invernan, a Fort William bypass and the road between Onich and Fort William. Any future improvements, however, cannot be piecemeal.'

Transport Scotland responded by stating that the figures showed there had been fewer casualties on the roads since 2012 than the five years before that, with

the number falling from 665 to 523. A Transport Scotland spokesperson said: 'Across Scotland, significant progress in road safety has been made, with the latest figures showing deaths are down 35 per cent compared to the 2004-2008 baseline. A single death on our roads is one too many and we are committed to further improving road safety.'

'We are also committed to upgrading the A82 between Tarbet and Invernan, having announced last year that the design of the preferred option for the scheme will be taken forward as a 7.3-metre wide carriageway. When complete, the upgraded road will bring significant improvements for road users and local communities who rely on this route, which connects the Highlands and Islands with the central belt.'

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FW

Carers team up for Lochaber events

HEALTH and social care providers across Lochaber are holding a series of events designed to give residents an update on job opportunities within the local care-at-home sector.

Independent and voluntary care providers including Crossroads, Day and Night Owls, Carr Gomm and Lucerne have teamed up with Scottish Care, the national care provider membership organisation, and NHS Highland to hold care information and recruitment fairs at five locations across the region.

And with specialist information sessions provided at all the events, people will be able to find out from the carers present at each fair how best their own or their families' care needs can be met.

The first fair will be held at Fort William Library on Monday January 22, before moving on to Strontian, Ballachulish, Spean Bridge and Caol on successive days.

Fair organiser Julie Fraser, Scottish Care's care-at-home development officer, said: 'The idea is to provide information about what support and services are available and how they can be accessed.'

'In addition, we want to show jobseekers there are considerable opportunities for them to work in their own communities in a flexible way.'

Staff from NHS Highland will be at each event highlighting the considerable level of support and training the health board can provide for employees within its care-at-home services.

Dates for the events are: Monday January 22, Fort William Library, 10am to 4pm; Tuesday January 23, Strontian Village Hall, 10am to 1pm; Wednesday January 24, Ballachulish Hall, 10am to 1pm; Thursday January 25, Spean Bridge Community Centre, 10am to 1pm; Friday January 26, Caol Community Centre, 10am to 4pm.

Julie said: 'Everyone is welcome to come along.'

For further information or recruitment packs contact Julie.fraser@scottishcare.org or phone 07399419712.



West Highland College lecturer, Geoff Wright, right, and Liam Simmonds make sure there are plenty of laughs in the show. IF F03 Panto Geoff Wright



Tweedledum, Catherine MacInnes, and Tweedledummer, Lisa MacIsaac, were a great comedy duo in the show. IF F03 Panto Catherine MacInnes Lisa MacIsaac.



Jack MacMurray and Catriona Sillars were the brilliant 'Waltzers'. IF F03 Panto Jack MacMurray

Oh yes it is was the perfect Fort panto

THE MOST important ingredient of a successful panto is ensuring the show has plenty of laughs and students from West Highland College UHI certainly did that at the Nevis Centre on Friday night.

Alice in Pantoland was the title of this classic show, which brought the house down thanks to the brilliant efforts of the college's Skills for Learning Students.

The evening's entertainment raised £911 from ticket sales and a raffle, which is being donated to the British Red Cross.

Lecturer Geoff Wright told

the *Lochaber Times* the link between the students and the Red Cross came about last year when students from the Fort William campus travelled to Glasgow to meet with refugees and asylum seekers.

'It was an amazing experience. Staff from the Red Cross had come up to Fort William to hold workshops for the students and then the students made the return visit to the aid agency offices in Glasgow,' explained Mr Wright. 'Meeting the asylum seekers had a big impact on our students. It was massively inspirational and when asked what

charity they wanted to donate the panto proceeds to, they said the Red Cross immediately.

'The session with asylum seekers and conflict refugees let the students see these people were fellow human beings and not just something distant you only see on your television news.'

Friday night's panto was the first time the students had taken a performance outwith the college and it was Mr Wright's last duty before retiring - although he will still be working with the students one day a week for some of this year.

'All our students have varying

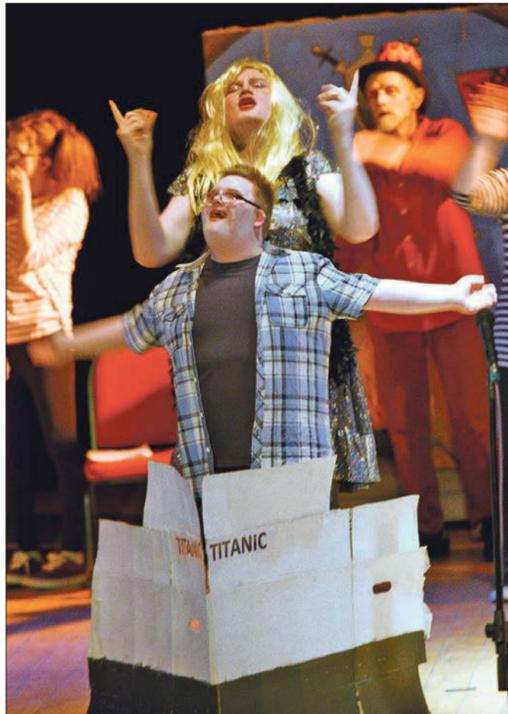
degrees of support needs and the panto is a way of them saying "here we are".

'They put a tremendous amount of work into the show, which is all about building confidence and expressing themselves, as well as having fun in the process,' said Mr Wright, who has worked at the college for the past five years.

'I have to say this group of students are extraordinary people to work with and they are extraordinarily good in this show. They are a tremendous bunch of individuals and I have loved working with them.'



Alice's Mum, Natasha Brown, gets 'interviewed'. IF F03 Panto Natasha Brown



Above: John Angus and Liam Simmonds were great as the 'Titanic Singers'. IF F03 Panto John Angus Sillars Liam Simmonds



John Northover as Simple Simon. IF F03 Panto John Northover



As with every good panto, the audience also had a part to play in the fun. IF F03 Panto audience participation



Queen May, Liam Simmonds, was a central character in the panto hilarity. IF F03 Panto Liam Simmonds



Right: Alex MacInnes was one of the 'cotton-eyed dancers'. IF F03 Panto Alex MacInnes02



Left: Alice's Dad, Mark MacLeod, and Alice, Ceitlin MacMaster, enjoy a dance. F03 Panto Mark MacLeod Ceitlin MacMaster

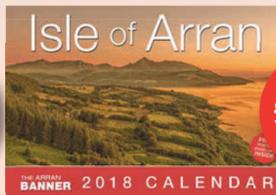


The cast of Alice in Pantoland. IF F03 Panto cast02

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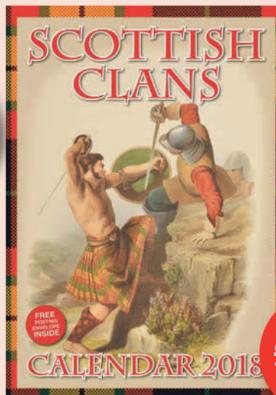
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Council budget woes mean 'hard decisions' says Baxter

MARK ENTWISTLE
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WITH Highland Council facing a £26 million shortfall in its next budget, a way has to be found to avoid cuts in services having a disproportionate impact on Lochaber residents.

So says the council's Lochaber Area Committee chairman Andrew Baxter, councillor for Fort William and Ardnamurchan, as the worrying financial situation facing the local authority became clear after a £9.4m cut in Scottish Government funding was announced last month.

Work has been going on for months to prepare a revenue and capital budget for 2018/19 and beyond, with the anticipation of a significant cut in

available funds. The Scottish Government's proposed grant settlement was announced last month and work has been ongoing with a team of councillors to prepare a list of savings options to consider.

The council is facing a budget gap for 2018/19 of £25.8m, comprising £8.1m provision for pay, price and contract inflation; £8.3m in budget pressures and a £9.4m cut in Scottish Government grant funding.

The council says it has been working for some time to identify savings and income opportunities.

Budget leader Councillor Alistair Mackinnon said a range of proposals to achieve a balanced budget were being discussed with members and trade unions.

These proposals consist of additional income totalling £6.9m, including a three per cent Council Tax increase, and reductions in spending totalling £14.1m. This still leaves a £4.8m balance of savings to be identified.

Mr Mackinnon added: '£25.8 million is a huge cut to our budget and comes after we cut our budget by £20m in efficiencies over the past year.'

'We are also unable to increase council tax beyond three per cent without Scottish Government penalties. This leaves us very few places to turn to find more savings. There will be no option but to cut services and to charge more for what we provide.'

Council leader Margaret Davidson says while every effort is being made to achieve a

balanced budget without impact on staff numbers, unfortunately this will not be achievable across the whole organisation.

'I appreciate this is a worrying time for everyone, however, we are committed to doing all we can to avoid compulsory redundancies wherever possible,' she said. 'The council has a very good track record of minimising compulsory redundancies. This has been achieved by working in partnership with trade unions to optimise the use of vacancies and turnover to achieve successful redeployment.'

No final decision on budget proposals will be made until the council meets on February 15.

Asked what it could mean for the people of Lochaber, Councillor Baxter told the *Lochaber*

Times that many would say to just increase the Council Tax.

'But even if we increased the Council Tax by the maximum three per cent we would be allowed to, that would still go nowhere near fixing the £26 million deficit,' he said.

'We are faced with making some really hard decisions, although no decisions have been made final yet. We have to find a way of not imposing cuts on services that would have a disproportionate effect on the residents of Lochaber.'

Right: Councillor Andrew Baxter, who says hard decisions will have to be made as a result of the local authority's looming budget shortfall.



First new sleeper trains on track

THE FIRST carriages for a new £100 million fleet of Caledonian Sleeper trains have arrived in Scotland ahead of their introduction to the service later this year.

Starting in October, the overnight rail service – of which Fort William is a main destination – will be transformed with the introduction of 75 new carriages being phased in.

Five carriages arrived in Glasgow on Tuesday morning to begin extensive testing.

The carriages have travelled through the Channel Tunnel to Scotland from the Velim Test Centre in the Czech Republic where they have been undergoing trials.

Plans for new Mallaig student centre

STUDENTS in Mallaig will have a new place to study if plans for a new learning centre are approved by the Highland Council.

West Highland College UHI wants to build a new learning centre in the heart of the village as part of the redevelopment of Mallaig Harbour.

The new building will replace the existing, outdated accommodation used by students studying shipping, maritime skills, RYA and MCA courses.

The application states the new centre will cater for approximately 30 full-time students, with provision for expansion if needed.

There will also be provision for distance learning and 'out of hours' community use.

A representative from West Highland College UHI said: 'We have outgrown our current accommodation and have been actively searching for alternative, larger premises to better serve our diverse student body and contribute to the skills needs of local businesses as they seek to take advantage of the fast growing "blue" sector of the economy for the Mallaig and surrounding small isles communities.'

'Working with Mallaig Harbour Authority, as part of a major redevelopment, we have



An artist's impression of the planned new Mallaig Harbour Learning Centre. Photograph: Keppie Design Ltd.

identified a centrally-located site in Mallaig and, with the assistance of colleagues in Highlands and Islands Enterprise and the University of the Highlands and Islands, have developed plans for our new building.'

Situated opposite the railway

on ground currently occupied by Mallaig Harbour Authority workshops, the proposed building includes a range of up-to-date facilities.

'Our plans will provide students with an enhanced learning experience in a larger number of flexible, technology enabled classrooms, student support, study space, video conferencing, staff and reception areas, storage, drying room and showers,' the representative continued.

'It will also give access to state-of-the-art technology and meeting space for local businesses and partner organisations, including Mallaig High School, whose pupils join us for part-

nership courses. We are now awaiting the successful outcome of the planning process and, subject to securing the funding required, will be looking to realise the project within two to three years.'

Mallaig Learning Centre merged with Mallaig Marine Centre in 2008 and now around 30 full-time students attend the centre, while many more attend the college's 16 commercial courses.

A spokesman for the architects behind the plans, Keppie Design Ltd, added: 'We hope this building can be a landmark that the community can be proud of at the entrance to their town.'

Cold snap hits Lochaber



Gritters were out in force this week in Lochaber. JP F03 snowplough 01. Photo: Abrightside Photography.

LOCHABER residents faced freezing temperatures and snow this week as a cold snap spread across the country.

Motorists were urged to take care and plan ahead as snow and ice made for tricky driving conditions in Lochaber.

School pupils were sent home, with Ardgour Primary School, Acharacle Primary School and Ardnamurchan High School all closing on Tuesday because of snow.

The weather was good news for snowsports enthusiasts, though, who can expect good skiing on the slopes this week. The Met Office issued amber weather warnings for snow and ice at the start of the week, with the cold weather set to continue into the weekend. Call 08005 642272 or visit highland.gov.uk/schoolclosures to get the latest updates on school closures. Travel information can be found on Highland Council and Traffic Scotland websites.

Councillor moves to quell fears of whopping garage rent rises

LOCHABER'S senior councillor has moved to quell fears over a possible large hike in rents for garages in Fort William.

Andrew Baxter, who represents Fort William and Ardnamurchan and is chairman of Highland Council's Lochaber Area Committee, spoke to the *Lochaber Times* after it was contacted by several irate local residents complaining about what they claimed was an unfair planned rise in the rents of garages or for the council sites on which their garages had been built.

Sammy Cameron, from Caol, recently showed the *Lochaber Times* the letter he received in November from Highland Council, which explained that at the local authority's community services committee in February last year, councillors had requested a review of garage rents with a view to increasing income from them.

The letter explained the suggestion had been made that rents for garages and garage sites could rise to £12.50 per week and £9 per week respectively for council tenants and to £15 plus VAT weekly for garages and

sites for non-tenants. The move would see the present cost of renting garages and garage plots to private householders like Mr Cameron rocket and would see the annual charge for his garage site rise from £112.56 a year to an eye-watering £936.

The letter went on to ask Mr Cameron and others who received the letter what they thought of this idea – and 'not much' seemed to be the general consensus.

'It's certainly not reasonable to be looking at rises like that when you don't get anything back in return for it,' said Mr Cameron, who felt if there had to be a rise it should be only one to one-and-a-half per cent, in line with council house rents.

He added: 'Plus, if a lot of people are forced out of their garages as a result of such big rises and decide to park their cars on the streets instead, that's going to make the existing traffic problems a lot worse.'

'Hopefully, common sense will prevail. We'll see.'

But Mr Baxter says the letter from Highland Council was possibly badly worded and perhaps gave the impression rents were

definitely going to increase by the amounts stated.

Mr Baxter said the garage rent review was actually prompted by himself, after he raised the issue of commercial rents of garages in Inverness because he didn't feel there should be a 'one-size-fits-all' approach to the levying of garage rents.

And he revealed: 'The good news is we will be recommending to councillors a below inflation increase of three per cent,' he explained.

'I have also asked officers to put in place plans so that future rent levels and spending to improve garage sites are decided at local level in Lochaber.'

A Highland Council spokesperson said: 'There is currently a consultation on garage rents and charges for the new financial year of 2018/19.'

'The analysed results are due to be reported to the People Committee on January 25 for consideration as part of the Housing Revenue Account report on 2018/19 revenue estimates.'

'Any change to rents and charges would come into effect from April 2018.'

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Photo by Eoin Carey

Study into more rural care homes on Lewis

A STUDY is under way into the feasibility of developing 16 extra care homes in rural Lewis — with four potential sites under consideration.

Three of the sites — in Eoropie and on land adjacent to Sgoil an Taobh Siar and Carloway Day Centre — are being examined because they are owned by Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, one of the lead partners alongside Hebridean Housing Partnership.

A fourth site, at Upper Barvas, is being considered because landowner Urras Oighreachd Ghabhsainn (Galson Estate Trust) approached the partner organisations with plans for an investment opportunity which would help further the aims of Galson's Strategic Plan. Upper Barvas common grazings committee has agreed the land should be taken out of crofting tenure to allow the development to go ahead and help address a critical shortage of available land for housing.

Lisa Maclean, Galson Estate Trust's commercial development manager, said: 'We have a vision to create a complex that will incorporate extra care housing, self-build housing plots, social housing, childcare/wrap around childcare and a central hub that will support the delivery of services aimed at a community health and well being.'

The outcome of study will be presented to the Lewis Residential Care Project Board for consideration.

Witnesses sought after sheep killed

POLICE in Skye are appealing for information after two sheep were killed in Glenbrittle on the afternoon of Friday January 5.

A large black and tan dog was seen in the area at the time. Officers are also keen to speak to the driver of a green Land Rover which was also seen at the time.

Sergeant Andrew Shaw said: 'Dog owners are reminded that allowing dogs to chase livestock or be at large among livestock is an offence. Livestock owners are legally entitled to protect their animals as necessary, which can result in the destruction of the dog if necessary to protect the lives of other animals.'

Anyone with information on should contact police on 101, quoting reference NP131/18, or call Crimestoppers on 0800 555111.

Lack of Skye housing is hitting healthcare provision, says NHS

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A LACK of suitable, affordable accommodation for frontline healthcare staff in Skye is having an increasing impact on essential local health and social care services, according to NHS Highland.

The health board said concerns are growing about meeting the housing needs of key workers as this is hampering efforts to recruit and retain skilled healthcare personnel within the community.

Now management are calling on local knowledge for assistance, asking Skye residents to get in touch if anyone is willing to rent property or provide

local accommodation solutions. Specific concerns were brought into sharp focus this week when a recently-appointed highly-qualified midwife to Skye was very close to withdrawing from the post because she struggled to find suitable accommodation for herself and her dog.

This was despite her making considerable efforts to find suitable housing and being flexible over the choice of location. Jacqui Bradley, a full-time midwife currently based in Edinburgh, had been appointed in December and is due to take up her post at the beginning of February.

With the out-of-hours midwifery service for Skye and Lochalsh suspended since mid-November

because of a lack of qualified midwifery staff, it was crucial to recruit a full-time midwife to restore the 24/7 service.

Kate Earnshaw, NHS Highland's district manager for Skye, Lochalsh and Wester Ross, said: 'Happily, a solution has been found for Jacqui and we are grateful for the help and suggestions we received from local councillors, the local housing association and others.'

'However, we remain concerned about the ongoing challenges with a number of other posts we are about to recruit. For instance, we are interviewing for an advanced nurse practitioner next week and accommodation is, again, likely to be an issue.'

Mrs Earnshaw explained there

are a number of other key posts coming up on Skye that they have been unable to fill so far.

'With other existing staff yet to settle into what accommodation is available, and a staff member recently resigning because of the lack of suitable housing, you can understand why we are keen to find affordable solutions to this issue,' she added.

Skye MSP Kate Forbes acknowledged there is a serious shortage of affordable housing in Skye and Lochalsh, saying average house prices are high and there is not enough housing stock. She said: 'Despite recent house building on Skye, it isn't keeping up with demand and this demonstrates why the Scottish Government's target of building

50,000 affordable homes is so critical. Housing is the number one most common issue raised with me and I'm fighting hard to get as many of the 50,000 new homes built on Skye. The Scottish Government has entered an agreement with Highland Council and committed millions of pounds to build affordable houses in the Highland so these need to be built in Skye and Lochalsh to support key workers like healthcare professionals.'

'The Scottish Government has also extended the self-build loan scheme with the Highland Small Communities Housing Trust so that people who want to self-build can access finance.'

'That is obviously only suitable over the longer term and for

people like healthcare professionals, I'm pleased to see more of a joined up approach between NHS Highland and Skye and Lochalsh Housing Association.'

NHS Highland is now in discussions with the council, housing associations and housing developers to see what more can be done to help its frontline staff, recognising that other key workers in organisations such as the fire service and the private healthcare sector are experiencing the same problems.

Anyone who knows of any local affordable accommodation or who is willing to rent property to NHS Highland staff, should contact Kate Earnshaw on 01471 820600 or via email at kateearnshaw@nhs.net.

Ex-NASA engineer hails Lews Castle College cash

A FORMER NASA engineer believes Lews Castle College UHI could be at the forefront of cutting-edge technological innovation.

Dr Chris Macleod's remarks came after it was announced the college will see a major expansion of its innovation centre thanks to £20,000 from wind farm charity Point and Sandwick Trust (PST).

The money will go towards high-tech equipment to allow the centre to expand its research and testing capabilities into more specialist areas including communications and bio-tech.

The centre's research capabilities will be doubled and centre founder Dr Macleod hopes it will foster a new generation of technologically literate islanders, encourage more high-tech start-ups and attract inward investment.

Dr Macleod, who is from Marybank and returned to the island four years ago after a 30-year career elsewhere, wants to see a new focus in the islands on high-tech, health-wealth industries.

'If you look at the richest



Donald John MacSween looks on while student Natasha Tew uses the centre for research, helped by Chris Macleod, centre, and Andrew Mackenzie.

people in the world — Bill Gates, Steve Jobs, Amazon founder Jeff Bezos, Elon Musk and others — every one of them is a high-tech entrepreneur.

'The highest worth, highest growth industries in the world are high-technology industries and unless civilisation comes to an end suddenly, that's not going

to change. It's only going to get bigger,' he said.

And he believes there is no reason why Lewis could not be at the forefront.

'If you're developing software, you just push a button and it gets sent to the other side of the world in a second. There's no 'big things' to export. You can

also do it as a distributed workforce from your house,' he said.

Lecturer Dr Macleod came to Lews Castle College UHI where he was senior lecturer and director of research in its school of engineering.

He was in the United States before that.

The centre will be opened out to individual members of the public and interested community organisations later in the year. It is currently used by students and staff at the college and schoolchildren through the Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths programme.

The centre is essentially a large room in the college, containing desks equipped with electronics testing equipment for research and development. It also has a small 3D printer, which allows mechanical pieces to be printed out.

The £20,000 from PST — the charity behind the award-winning Beinn Ghrìdeag community wind farm just outside Stornoway — will allow the centre to buy more high-tech equipment and a bigger, more sophisticated

3D printer, capable of generating a model of a propeller, for example.

PST chairman Angus McCormack added: 'In supporting the creation of the PST Innovation Centre in conjunction with UHI we seek to encourage cutting edge thinking that may benefit us all.'

Around 15 people so far have expressed an interest in using the centre.

Dr Macleod added: 'We are very grateful for Point and Sandwick Trust's support for the project. It will ensure the centre will have the best equipment on the island, which will benefit students, school pupils, local businesses, entrepreneurs and the community in general.'

'The very worst that can happen is all the school pupils and the students on the island have access to all these new facilities — so it's a very, very low risk venture.'

'The island benefits, no matter what happens. Even if no companies come out of it — worst case scenario — it means young people from the Western Isles can train in these areas.'

Baby box scheme praised

ALASDAIR Allan, SNP MSP for Na h-Eileanan an Iar, has commended the success of the Scottish Government's 'baby box' scheme in the opening six months since its launch.

Latest figures from the Scottish Government show the baby boxes have already benefited 84 newborns across NHS Western Isles.

Commenting, Dr Allan said: 'It is excellent to see so many families in the Islands benefiting from the baby box.'

'The boxes are a positive Scottish Government initiative providing parents with many of the essentials they need to care for their child.'

'The baby box is a key part of the Scottish Government's commitment to make Scotland the best place to grow up — and contains important items for parents and babies including baby clothes, a digital ear thermometer, a bath towel, a changing mat and books. The box itself also doubles as a bed for a newborn, containing a mattress, mattress protector and fitted sheet — providing a safe and warm place for babies to sleep. I'm delighted 84 newborns in our islands have now benefited from this progressive initiative from the Scottish Government and I look forward to seeing families in our islands continue to reap its benefits.'

Visiting hours reduced at Stornoway hospital to protect patients

FAMILY and friends of patients in the Western Isles Hospital are facing restrictions on visiting times to reduce the threat of spreading flu.

As a result of a high level of respiratory illness within Western Isles Hospital in Stornoway, including confirmed cases of Influenza A, NHS Western Isles has temporarily restricted visiting hours to protect patients, staff and visitors.

As of Wednesday last week, visiting is restricted to

between 2pm to 3pm and 7pm to 8.30pm, until further notice. In some circumstances, additional visiting can be discussed with the senior charge nurse of a ward.

Any members of the public with flu or flu-like symptoms are requested not to visit patients in hospital.

Members of the public are reminded the free flu vaccination remains available for those in the 'at-risk' groups, as well as those over 65, pregnant women and all healthcare workers and carers.

Director of public health Dr Maggie Watts stated:

'The vaccination is the best and most effective form of protection against flu. The flu virus can make even healthy people very unwell and puts extra pressure on our health service at what is already a very busy time of year. In line with the rest of Scotland, we are seeing a higher than usual number of people within the community with flu-like illnesses, as well as an increasing number of patients admitted to hospital with flu symptoms.'

Small Isles cafe seeks new owners

A CAFÉ on the Isle of Canna is seeking a new owner.

Café Canna, the only café or bar on the island, has been placed on the market, with the community also hoping to attract new inhabitants.

Situated on the shores of the island's harbour, Café Canna was established in 2014 by owner Chris Deplano, who leased vacant premises from island landlord The National Trust for Scotland (NTS) following a community appeal to repopulate the island after numbers fell to just nine residents.

Since then, the café has grown in popularity, attracting around 10,000 visitors during the tourist season, with many coming by sailing boat to use the island's natural anchorage between the Scottish mainland, the Isle of Skye and the Outer Hebrides.

Skye-born owner Chris, who did not come from a catering



Café Canna needs a new owner. Photograph: graficanna.com.

background, said: 'It's been a dream come true to have had the experience of establishing and running Café Canna, but it's probably now time to hand the apron on to someone else.'

'It's been an amazing four

years. We've had a great team here on the island and we can't give enough thanks to the people who have supported us, from local and sailing communities, to seasonal visitors and our landlord NTS. It has been

a magical adventure and we just hope we can find someone who shares our passion and drive to run the café and build on the goodwill and support out there.'

As the landlord of Canna, NTS, says it is happy to support Chris and the community in finding a new owner to take on the lease and run the business.

A spokesperson for NTS stated: 'We've had a great working relationship with Chris and the team over the past four years and hope this will continue in the future with new owners in place. We fully support Chris and the island community in seeking new proprietors for Café Canna and hope the great work and excellent service can continue.'

Prospective purchasers can request further information by visiting cafecanna.co.uk/sale or by checking the Café Canna Facebook page.

Western Isles pupils shortlisted for film awards

PUPILS from the Nicolson Institute, Castlebay School, Sgoil an Taobh Siar and Sgoil an Iochdair have been shortlisted for the prestigious FilmG awards.

The Nicolson Institute students will be especially delighted as they have been shortlisted in three categories. Their film Mèirleach nam Meechs is shortlisted for The Best Film Award and FilmG's Gaelic Award and Gillian MacLean has also been shortlisted in the category for Best Actor/Actress.

Castlebay Community School is shortlisted in FilmG's Gaelic Awards for

their film, Na Fiaclan Fireannach. In the primary school section, shortlisted are Sgoil an Iochdair with Creid Crogaigh and Sgoil an Taobh Siar with their take on Britain's Got Talent, Talant an Taobh Siar.

And it wasn't just island schools which were successful in reaching the final stages of the competition. A youth group from Fèis na Hearadh is also on the shortlist for the Best Film Award for their film Ròs.

Councillor Angus McCormack, chairman of Education, Sport and Children's Services at the Comhairle, praised all the

students who had reached this stage of the competition.

'This is further evidence of the praiseworthy work which is being done in our schools and in our communities,' he said.

'A lot of effort went into making the films and I wish every school, pupil and community group the best of luck.'

The awards ceremony will take place in Glasgow on Friday February 9. All shortlisted schools and community groups will be represented at the event at the Old Fruitmarket, Glasgow. All this year's films can be viewed at www.filmg.co.uk.

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Laser pen crackdown welcomed

LOCHABER MSP Kate Forbes has welcomed action by the UK government to crack down on high-powered laser pens following a spate of incidents in the Highlands last year.

Last week, Consumer Minister Margot James MP said she would work with manufacturers and retailers to improve laser pointer labelling, indicating they must not be pointed at eyes or at vehicles. She also announced plans to target online sales by working with retailers including eBay.

Ms Forbes has been campaigning on the issue following a laser pen attack on a school bus in the Black Isle last year and a month ago a volunteer lifeboat crew from Invergordon were targeted whilst out on a training exercise in the Cromarty Firth.

The MSP for Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch said she was pleased the UK Government had responded to the consultation on laser pens by restricting high-powered laser pointers entering the UK.

'It is also important there is more education and awareness around laser pens, so improved labelling is very important,' she commented.

'However, this does need to go further as labelling can still be ignored by those intent on mischief.'

'The consequences of misusing laser pointers can be very damaging, particularly for children. I welcome tougher penalties outlined in the Laser Misuse Bill because people need to appreciate just how dangerous these laser pointers can be.'

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Spean Bridge councillors ramp up row over ward fund cash

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SPEAN Bridge community councillors have agreed to seek an investigation by the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman into Highland Council's discretionary ward funding.

It follows a row last month when Spean Bridge, Roy Bridge and Achnacarry Community Council had an application for money to distribute to small local community groups to fund Christmas functions rejected by Highland Council on the grounds the expenditure 'could not be properly monitored'.

The refusal provoked ire

amongst community councillors, not least because money had been granted on the same basis for the last few years without any problems.

The community council agreed to complain to Audit Scotland and at its January meeting last week community councillors agreed with chairman John Fotheringham that not only should the community council also formally complain to the local authority ombudsman but that it should also lodge a Freedom of Information (FOI) request with Highland Council to seek any evidence to support the existence of the monitoring procedures Highland Council

claims is necessary for such awards.

Mr Fotheringham said he had been conducting research into the ward discretionary budgets and according to the rules governing the issue of money, there was a stipulation cash was not to be used for hospitality unless the hospitality was an intrinsic part of an organisation's central remit.

'But guess which organisation did spend money on hospitality?' he asked, to which someone attending the meeting replied: 'Highland Council'. 'Bingo!' answered Mr Fotheringham.

At the community council meeting in December, Mr Fotheringham highlighted that while ward fund grants for school activities could not exceed £250, Mallaig High School had still been given £1,500 for a trip to London, while Mallaig Primary School Parent Council was given £1,200 for ski-ing lessons at Nevis Range.

Mr Fotheringham told this month's meeting: 'Mallaig seems to have done extremely well out of it. Nothing against these schools but I'm a little concerned Highland Council appears to be making the rules to suit itself. The council is not enforcing some rules, but enforcing others. So I think we need to ratchet things up a bit

and write to the local authority ombudsman. Highland Council approves money for hospitality to itself but then says it doesn't fund hospitality and then you have Mallaig receiving substantially more than we have ever managed to get. So I think we contact the local authority ombudsman because I don't think it's fair. In fact, I think it is all wholly unfair.'

Allan Henderson, Independent councillor for Caol and Mallaig, told the community council meeting it might be unaware of the lengths to which he and fellow Caol and Mallaig councillor Ben Thompson had gone to resolve the community

council's problems in obtaining money from the fund to give to small local groups for Christmas parties. 'But we still had to take the flak for it after the decision went against us and it was embarrassing for us,' said Councillor Henderson.

Mr Fotheringham told the two councillors he was not criticising them, but rather the system used by the local authority.

'I think we put in an FOI request and see how much monitoring exactly has been done [by Highland Council] and if it has said it does more than it actually has, then Audit Scotland's going to love that,' said Mr Fotheringham.

Lundavra pupils raise cash for Mary's Meals

PUPILS from primaries one and two at Lundavra Primary School in Fort William ran a Christmas postal service in the lead-up to Christmas, sorting and delivering cards to classes in the school in return for a donation to Mary's Meals charity.

This raised £126.37, which was then doubled by the charity which helps to feed hungry children at schools across the world.



Lochaber Sensory Care support

REPRESENTATIVES of Caol-based Lochaber Sensory Care (LSC) for sight and hearing support will be visiting Lochaline on Tuesday January 23.

LSC staff and volunteers will be at Morvern Medical Practice from 10.30am until 12.30pm to offer help and advice to anyone with a sight or hearing loss.

The team will also supply NHS hearing aid batteries, re-tube and maintain the hearing aids and help with any difficulties.

No appointment required.

Police concern over festive drink/drug driving figures

HIGHLANDS and Islands police reported 37 people in connection with alleged drink or drug-related driving offences over the festive period.

Road policing officers were involved in a national campaign aimed at preventing and detecting drink driving. The 31-day initiative involved high visibility patrols across the country cracking down on people who get behind the wheel under the influence.

In the Highlands and Islands, a total of 654 drivers returned a negative sample after being stopped and tested.

However, 37 people - 29 men and eight women - will be reported for alleged drink/drug driving offences, including four people who failed to provide a sample.

This compares to 38 reported over the same period in 2016 and 14 detected during a 28-day campaign in 2015, the first year after lower limits were introduced.

Inspector Neil Lumsden said: 'While the vast majority of drivers tested returned a negative sample, it remains disappointing that a small but significant minority still believe they can take the law into their own hands. It is especially concerning there has been a notable rise over the last two years compared to 2015, showing that some motorists are ignoring our repeated warnings and

still running the risks of drink driving. Taking control of a motor vehicle while under the influence - whether that is drink or drugs - is a reckless and selfish act, which can have a devastating impact on many lives.'

Specialist road policing and divisional officers have carried out static checks and mobile patrols throughout the campaign. In addition, officers work with intelligence provided by law-abiding members of the public who supply information about suspected drink driving.

Notably of the 37 people reported during the campaign this year, five were detected between 6am and 10am.

Inspector Lumsden added: 'As a force we have a zero tolerance approach to drink driving and so do our communities who have made it very clear they will not tolerate this kind of behaviour.'

'We use intelligence from the public to target specific vehicles and in planning where we target patrols. I would encourage anyone with concerns to report them. You are not being a kill-joy. You are playing your part in helping us keep people safe on the roads. Tackling drink and drug driving is not limited to Christmas. We will continue patrols aimed at removing drivers breaking the law from our roads and will always act on information from members of the public.'

Hunt on to find Lochaber veterans

LOCHABER veterans who served in Britain's armed forces during the Second World War are now eligible for free tours of their former battlefields.

The travel arm of the Royal British Legion (RBL) wants to find all surviving veterans of WWII so those able to can return to where they served to pay their respects to fallen comrades.

The tours are being funded by LIBOR banking industry fines and will enable a WWII veteran to return with a family member and carer.

The Royal British Legion has been running LIBOR-funded tours for Normandy veterans for the past four years and thanks to additional LIBOR funding can now widen the tours to all veterans of WWII - including those who served in North Africa and the Far East.

Kevin Lane, chairman of the Fort William and District branch of Legion Scotland, told the *Lochaber Times*: 'I hope as many WWII veterans as possible from Lochaber take advantage of it to pay homage to their fallen comrades.'

Nichola Rowlands-Smith, head of travel for the Royal British



Veterans are eligible for free tours of their former battlefields.

Legion, explained: 'We have organised tours for hundreds of D-Day veterans, a family member and carer and it has proven a very moving experience. We have been campaigning to widen the tours for all WWII veterans, as so many gave so much, and we feel they all deserve a final tour back to lay old ghosts to rest. We're delighted the Treasury has made this possible.'

The tours will take place from spring to autumn and will give the veterans - now mostly in

their 90s - the chance to meet up at significant battlefield sites, cemeteries and memorials.

Unfortunately, there is no database of veterans from WWII who are still alive so the Royal British Legion is calling on the public to spread the word to surviving veterans.

Veterans wishing to go on the tours need to apply via Remembrance Travel's tour operator Arena Travel on 01473 660800 or via www.arenatravel.com/our-holidays/remembrance-travel.

January Sale

<p>£5.79 save £1.50 Slimfast Powder Strawberry 438g RRP £7.29</p>	<p>£10.49 save 25% Protein World Slender Blend Powder 400g RRP £13.99</p>	<p>£1.99 half price Pantene Pro-V Shampoo & Conditioner 400ml RRP £3.99</p>
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<p>£1.99 save £3.00 L'Oréal Skin Perfection Micellar Water 200ml RRP £4.99</p>	<p>£1.49 save £2.50 Sure Antiperspirant 250ml RRP £3.99</p>	<p>£2.99 save £1.50 Sensodyne Rapid Relief White 75ml RRP £4.49</p>
<p>£3.99 save £3.67 Elnett Catwalk Limited Edition 400ml RRP £7.66</p>	<p>£2.49 save £3.51 Huggies Baby Wipes Pure Quads 56's RRP £6.00</p>	<p>from £3.49 half price Nivea Urban Skin Range</p>
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Nevis Radio

NEVIS Radio is bidding to bag a massive cash boost from Tesco.

Grants of up to £4,000, raised from carrier bag sales in Tesco stores, are being awarded to community projects throughout the country and Lochaber's radio station is one of the groups on the shortlist to receive the cash award.

Shoppers are being invited to head along to Tesco stores to vote for who they think should take away the grant.

Commercial manager at the station Simon Aberley said: 'We were absolutely delighted when we found out we were shortlisted. Hopefully the community will be behind us.'

If granted, the funds would be put towards a studio refurbishment, which would free up other resources which can be allocated elsewhere. One area could be to cover the high cost of fixing a fault in the station's transmission equipment, which left some listeners in Lochaber without a signal towards the end of 2017.

Voting is open in all Tesco stores throughout January and February. Customers can cast their vote using a token given to them at the check-out each time they shop.

Nevis Radio is also promoting an active January with a sponsored Loch Ness challenge – to swim or row 22.5 miles in 12 weeks. The aim is to raise funds for station expenditure on maintenance and faults. Anyone wishing to take part should email admin@nevisradio.co.uk or call 01397 700007.

Kilmonivaig

THE REFURBISHED church hall at Kilmonivaig Parish Church, a project partially funded by Highland LEADER funding, has been scheduled for Sunday March 4 at 2pm.

The £55,000 project included new insulation, replacement windows and fire door, extended and refitted kitchen and new toilets, lighting, central heating and storage space. It is hoped the building will be used for a range of community and church uses and will also be a benefit when events take place at the nearby Commando Memorial.

The community council already uses the building for its meetings but it is hoped the official opening will help publicise the possibilities the building offers and acknowledge the support received.

Elected representatives, community and church representatives and others involved with the project have been invited to the opening.



Steeplejacks tackle Fort church spire

The Fort William skyline had several additions last week, when steeplejacks scaled the spire of St Andrew's Episcopal Church in the town's High Street. They were working on re-earthing the spire's lightning conductor at the church, which was built between 1879 and 1884. Known as 'The Queen of Highland Churches', it is now a Category A listed building.

Fort William women hear of vital skin work

THE TALK at Fort William Scottish Women's Institute's first meeting of 2018 was given by institute member Hazel Smith.

Mrs Smith spoke of her work, some years ago, as a volunteer Red Cross skin camouflage practitioner.

Mrs Smith began her career as a hairdresser and beautician, later expanding into theatrical make up and college lecturing.

When she moved to South East Scotland and was a Red Cross area manager, she was asked if she would be interested in training as one of the charity's volunteer skin camouflage practitioners.

After training, on one of her days off, she set up a monthly clinic in a hospital in East Lothian. There she saw patients with skin disfigurements who had been referred to her by their GPs, consultants or even self-referred.

At the consultation, the

best colour match for the patient's skin tone was found and the patient was taught to apply the special waterproof covering products.

Unfortunately, for patient confidentiality, Mrs Smith was unable to show illustrated examples of the work of these skin specialists.

However, from her descriptions and the reactions of her patients the results of the skilled applications are remarkable.

Mrs Smith gave a clear understanding of this special and vital work. This service, started in 1975, was transferred to the charity Changing Faces in 2011.

Mrs Smith was thanked for her interesting and informative talk by Edythe Knowles.

The next meeting will be on Monday February 5 in the Montrose Centre, Inverloch, at 7.15pm when Sheena Fraser will talk about her trip to Nepal.

Police probe hay bale fire

POLICE in Fort William are appealing for information following a fire in Bohuntine, Roy Bridge.

Fourteen hay bales were set alight on Saturday night sometime between 10pm and 11pm. Three appliances from the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service attended and extinguished the flames.

Anyone with information, or who was in the area at the time and saw anything, should call Fort William police on 101 quoting reference number NP420/18. Information can also be left anonymously by using Crimestoppers on 0800 555111.

Spean Bridge, Roy Bridge and Achnacarry Community Council

SPEAN Bridge, Roy Bridge and Achnacarry Community Council held its first meeting of 2018 last week.

Matters arising included:

■ Bear and Transport Scotland:

The chairman has sent photographs to BEAR showing the deteriorating road surfaces at the junction of the A82/A86 and in the middle of the carriageway on the A82 about 200 metres north of Spean Bridge. BEAR claims to be monitoring the situation, but the community council requested immediate repairs.

The chairman reported that on December 24, 2017, drains on the bridge in Spean Bridge overflowed, resulting in the flooding of the Woollen Mill, Spean Lodge and standing water and flooding on the bridge.

It was agreed the chairman would write to invite a representative from BEAR Scotland to the next meeting to address concerns.

■ **Highland Council:** Concerns have been expressed about the lack of gritting on rural and some village side roads. Highland councillors have been asked to consider whether roads used by school taxis should be included in secondary routes. The communi-

ty council has asked what criteria has been used to prioritise the other routes.

Following a recent investigation, Iain Bruce-Low has discovered the suspected collapsed culvert at Clunes was actually verge erosion at the end of a culvert pipe beside the resident's garden.

It is proposed pipework in the area will be jetted with a gully machine.

A headwall will be built at the end of the outlet pipe and the erosion infilled before the end of January, if winter maintenance does not take priority.

A complaint from Johnny Bell of Gairloch about potholes and a moving embankment had been investigated and the retaining wall had been found to be intact. Highland Council could find no evidence to support the theory the embankment was moving but will endeavour to fill in the potholes and build the road up.

Road signs which had caused confusion on the B8004 have been removed.

The roads team will try and temporarily repair potholes on Corriechollie Road just beyond the railway bridge, with a permanent repair later.

The secretary is to request a grit bin for Keppoch Terrace in Roy Bridge.

■ Ward discretionary funding:

The chairman has written to Audit Scotland seeking clarity about Highland Council's refusal to allow the community council to apply for ward discretionary funding on behalf of seven small organisations. It was agreed the community council should also ask, under Freedom of Information legislation, for evidence to support the monitoring procedures they claim are necessary for such awards and write to the Local Authority Ombudsman about a number of irregularities in published procedures.

It was decided the treasurer will apply for £250 from the ward discretionary fund for the Roy Bridge Garden project.

■ **Affordable housing:** A constructive meeting was held between The Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO) and Ronnie Macrae of Highlands and Islands Small Communities Housing Trust (HSCHT) on Thursday December 7. HSCHT is willing to support the community if it was considering buying land to develop itself and was hoping

to announce plans soon for affordable housing in Spean Bridge.

■ Resilience committee:

Ian Langley had produced an updated version of the preliminary document for discussion and this had been circulated. The community council debated the benefit of having its own website and Facebook Page to encourage communication with the community and it was agreed to explore costs for the next meeting.

■ **Killiechonate woodlands:** The chairman reported on his meeting with Rik Eppens. It is hoped a decision will be made soon about grant support for repairs to the woodland paths.

Without this external investment, it will be difficult to progress the work. Alternative funding streams for this and his ideas for renovating the Puggy Line as an accessible path as it passes through the estate were also discussed.

At present timber from the estate is transported via the forestry road to Aonach Mor and onto the A82 but impending cost increases mean Corriechollie Road may be used again if Highland Council was to permit it.

■ Community Planning Part-

nership: The community council received a positive response from the head of policy and reform. Preliminary discussions with Lochaber's Highland councillors suggest they are agreeable to explore new ways of working with community councils.

■ **Treasurer's report:** Expenditure for this month: £125 honorary payment for three months' secretarial duties and £413.75 for chairman's expenses, leaving a balance of £1,316.75.

■ Any other business:

It was noted the A86 has less speed camera vans than the A82. Councillor Allan Henderson is to find out how many gully machines Highland Council owns.

Issues with BT Broadband have been reported in Inverroy. Ian Langley will contact the chairman if this is found to be an on-going problem.

The community council will continue to monitor Openreach parking at the Spean Bridge telephone exchange as, despite requests, they have continued to occasionally block the pavement.

The next community council meeting will be on Tuesday February 6 at 7pm in Kilmonivaig Church Hall.

MSP visits under-threat Mallaig branch of RBS

LOCHABER MSP Kate Forbes made a fact-finding visit on Friday to the Mallaig branch of the Royal Bank of Scotland, which has been earmarked for closure.

During the visit, the MSP for Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch met with the regional manager Paul Dykes as well as local staff and expressed opposition on behalf of her constituents.

Last month, Ms Forbes led a Scottish Parliament debate on the closure of banks in rural areas.

Following an RBS announcement at the end of November, branches in Aviemore, Beauly and Kyle, as well as Mallaig, are expected to close.

The Mallaig branch has around 1,000 cus-

tomers and last year saw more than 10,000 transactions. If the closure goes ahead, the nearest branch will be more than an hour's drive away in Fort William.

Ms Forbes said: 'I was amazed by the absolute dedication of the staff who are keen to ensure no-one is anxious about how they will bank.'

'I recommend that if any customers are worried, they should pop into the branch and chat to the staff who will help with any questions.'

And she added: 'RBS and other banks are going to have to up their game to ensure rural customers are not disadvantaged because the impact on the rural economy would be colossal.'

Spean Bridge

EIGHT Spean Bridge residents are starting 2018 with an extra £1,000 in the bank after winning the fantastic prize in the People's Postcode Lottery.

The Altour Road neighbours, who play with the postcode PH34 4EZ, won the daily prize last Thursday.

Three of the eight winners have doubled their cash to £2,000 by playing with two tickets. People's Postcode

Lottery ambassador Judie McCourt sent her congratulations.

A minimum of 31 per cent of ticket sales goes directly to charities and players of People's Postcode Lottery have raised £263 million to date for 4,000 good causes across Great Britain and internationally.

Kinlochleven Community Trust was awarded £3,150 last year to support a gardening project.

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RETRO Roamer

More Roamerisms from 30 years ago

■ Bottle banks appeared on the council agenda and Fort William and Caol were mentioned as leading contenders for the siting of same. Up spoke councillor Nan Forbes, from Invergarry. 'Surely bottle banks and collections from them could be arranged for the outlying areas as well? This wouldn't need to be on a frequent or regular pick-up basis'. That brought a speedy response from Mallaig member Charlie King. 'That depends on which area you're talking about!' said he.

■ A local railwayman had a couple of off-duty, duty-free drams on Tuesday afternoon. Went home to bed. Woke up, looked at the clock and saw it was ten to seven. Dived out of bed and got the uniform on. Along to the depot for 7.15. 'What the hell are you doing here at this time of day?' he was asked. 'I'm here for the morning shift,' came the reasonable if not reasoned response. 'Well, you're either 12 hours early or 12 hours late, because it's quarter past seven at night!'

■ Poor Skeesh. Not long back from his Chindit reunion in York, he goes into the Volley for a chota peg. And what does he see? Huge Raffles Hotel-like fans burling away on the ceiling. Says he: 'Honestly, I thought I was back in Burma.' A week later Skeesh found a kindred spirit. 'Here!', exclaimed Alec, 'was it you who put these helicopter blades on the ceiling?' The question was directed at a local electrician whose mind was on higher things than the fans. 'Aye, why?', came his terse reply. 'Because,' began the measured response, 'every time I put tobacco into this paper for a roll-up it blows away all over the b.... bar. That's why!'

■ Hogmanay was a bit quiet along Achintore Road, apparently. However, it was there that Dr Sen became the only man in the Highlands to take in the New Year listening to classical sitar music on stereo. Mind you, lots of locals would have been wishing they could have joined him after they had been inflicted with some of the pseudo-Scottish offerings on the telly.

■ On the subject of New Year music, Laurence Byrne can lay claim to having been the most popular instrumentalist of the weekend – next to Paul McCartney. I understand one of the Lochaber high spots was when Laurence, on his accordion, played several snatches culled from his renditions in Fort William Senior Secondary School's production of comic opera 'The Pirates of Penzance'.

■ Mallaig harbour's Robert MacMillan received a late Christmas card this week. It was 'properly addressed', as the Post Office insists, and date stamped 'London, December 1'. It had been sent first class, complete with post code. However, on the envelope was another 'stamp'. This stated the item had been sent in error to Canada and it carried apologies in English and French. Robert's postcode contains the letters '4BQ' so I reckon the Christmas card reached Mallaig via Baie Comeau in Quebec.

■ And councillor Charlie King – aye, him again – was on the receiving end of another late, Mallaig-bound Christmas card this week. His came from the USA, but it had gone to Manila first. No, not Malaga – Manila. And in a manila envelope at that.

■ There's a lot of sharpening of sgian dhus going on these days in preparation for the annual assault on the haggis at Burns Suppers. The reason for the extra honing of the blades is because some of the top table haggis, haggies, haggae, might be – whisper it – plastic coated. Aye, the Common Market seems set on standardising the European approach to Frankfurters, bratwurst, liverwurst, black, white and red puddings and haggis, by insisting they be covered in plastic or clingfilm. After the 'attack' on the Round Table haggis, during which the Chiefstain o' the Puddin' Race skited off the silver plate as its plastic covering put up stern resistance to the sgian dhu, there could be chainsaws under the table from now on.

■ A local worthy was making his way up the hill on Lundavra Road last Friday having partaken of some refreshment at the staging post at the bottom. Just above Fort William Primary School, he met a female going downtown. 'Good afternoon,' our hero greeted her. 'And are you a visitor to Fort William?' Female gives him such a look, sizing up the amount of drink taken, and then exploded: 'Visitor, be damned. I'm your wife!'

■ Catherine MacLean of Rainbow Wools in Monzie Square, will soon be sporting her 'Wee Stinker' t-shirt, which she received as a winner of the Glasgow Herald's crossword of that name. Catherine's entry was on the prizelist of December 18. Seeing that Frances Connochie still hasn't taken delivery of her 'Wee Stinker' for an earlier win, Catherine has readily volunteered to let Mrs Connochie have a loan of hers for special occasions.

■ Young lad driving a tipper lorry full of hard core on Victoria Road. He's backing the truck prior to unloading, all the while haranguing his fellow workers. 'Get that so and so planking moved,' he yelled. 'And sort out that so and so mixer so I don't go and so and so flatten it. You useless so and sos'. While all this was going on, a lady motorist, who was being held up by this operation, felt disposed to call out to the young driver: 'I don't know who you are son, but surely you've got a grasp of words other than so and so?' Slightly chastened, the young driver gave back: 'Aye, I do.' However, indicating his colleagues, he added: 'But these so and sos don't.'

■ Drinking-up time now. Ruairidh, the Cairn Terrier, is the pride of one of our local licensed establishments. He is well-known to the clientele, largely due to his antics with his squeaky rubber toy. At precisely 11pm last Wednesday, Ruairidh came up the stairs and into the bar, his squeaky toy making a heck of a noise. That, of course, prompted the barman to announce that Ruairidh's racket had saved him the bother of ringing the bell.

Work starts on Hagrid's Hut in preparation for filming one of the Harry Potter movies in Glen Coe.



Win tickets to the Caravan Show



SCOTLAND'S largest exhibition is making its welcome return to Glasgow from February 8 to 11.

The Scottish Caravan, Motorhome and Holiday Home Show, which is once again sponsored by one of Scotland's leading motorhome dealers, BC Motorhomes, will take over the entire SEC in Glasgow for another year to welcome more than 200 exhibitors and outdoor experts across the four-day period.

And to celebrate the return of the much loved exhibition, we've teamed up with the show to offer readers the chance to win a pair of tickets to the ultimate outdoor extravaganza.

With the exhibition set to be bigger than ever in 2018 with an even larger family camping area, more accessories and hundreds of models, layouts

and specifications all in one place, it's the perfect destination to find out more about holidaying at home.

Visitors to the show will be able to have first sightings of the brand new models for 2018 as well as a variety of holiday homes from luxury lodges to eco pods.

With brands including Airstream, Swift, Elddis, Lunar, Bailey, Coachman, Roller Team and Rapido, there is guaranteed to be something to suit all needs and budgets.



Back by popular demand, visitors will also be able to purchase the 'must have' tents and accessories for their outdoor adventures at the Accessory Superstore.

Also on show will be marine products including jet skis and dinghies, as well as other marine accessories.

If that wasn't enough, visitors will be able to wander through the Holiday Park Village where staff will be on hand to provide

advice and offer suggestions to make sure their caravanning experience is the best it can be.

In addition, a number of clubs and associations will be there to help you pick out your next destination while free caravan towing or motorcaravan manoeuvring sessions are on offer from the Caravan and Motorhome Club.

Tickets on sale now. Book yours and find out more about this year's exhibition at www.caravanshowscotland.com

To be in with a chance of winning the tickets, simply answer the following question: What dates is the Scottish Caravan, Motorhome and Holiday Home Show on?

Send your answer to Scottish Caravan Show competition, Lochaber Times, High Street, Fort William, PH33 6AT.

Terms and conditions.

This competition is open to all adults over 18. All entries must include the name and contact details of the entrant. Entries will not be considered if they do not have all information specified.

Winners will be chosen at random and the editor's decision is final. The prize is one pair of tickets to the Scottish Caravan, Motorhome and Holiday Home Show 2018. Prize is valid for one day entry only and can be used on any one day between Thursday February 8 and Sunday February 11, 2018.

This prize has no cash alternative, is non-refundable and non-exchangeable. Travel and parking are not included. Please note that you must provide a full driving licence to participate in the free towing and manoeuvring sessions.

Choosing a nursery?

Registration week for free early learning and childcare is coming up in March. Here are some things worth considering when choosing a nursery.

Speak to your friends, relatives, colleagues and look in local press. These are generally trusted sources for recommendations.

See what The Care Inspectorate, independent regulators of care services in Scotland, says about local facilities. Their website www.careinspectorate.com allows you to search all the services in a town or postcode area. You'll find:

- Service and provider details - who, what and where.
- Conditions of Registration - opening times and maximum number of children cared for.
- Quality Grades - see how a service is performing. Care Inspectors during unannounced visits look at four themes, care and support, environment, staffing, leadership and management.
- Inspections - full inspection reports are available.
- Complaints / Enforcements

- * The aim of the nursery
- * Background on the nursery
- * Opening times
- * Numbers of children cared for
- * Inspection grades
- * How they will involve you and your child in the service
- * Information on Pre-Birth to Three / Curriculum for Excellence (Scottish Government policy)
- * A typical day at the nursery
- * Fees and payment terms

You will want to visit possible nurseries. Do not be afraid to take a list of questions on your visit. Similar to viewing a house, you should get a feel about the nursery as soon as you walk in.

Things to consider:

- * Is the entrance safe and secure?
- * Is the entrance area welcoming, with displays of children's work, parent notice boards and staff photographs.
- * Are you asked to sign in? The member of staff who shows you around should be knowledgeable and put you at ease.

As part of your visit, you should expect:

- * To view all playrooms, regardless

of the age of your child.

- * To be welcomed by all staff as you enter playrooms and a nice touch is when staff speak to your child, showing their genuine interest.
- * Playrooms to be calm, but not quiet - children should be engaged in a variety of learning opportunities including imaginative play, arts and crafts and physical play.
- * To view evidence of children's involvement such as art work and photographs.
- * The nursery and all resources to be visibly clean.
- * To be shown children's toilets, nappy changing areas and outdoor play areas - again these should be clean.
- * To speak to a member of the management team.
- * To see evidence of the curriculum in practice - planning and information documents displayed.

Argyll & Bute Council: Children born between March 1, 2015 and February 29, 2016 are eligible for free Early Learning and Childcare from August 2018. Registration week will take place week beginning Monday March 5, 2018.

Information leaflets will be available from early learning and childcare

providers at the time of registration and parents can obtain further guidance from the Early Years helpline (01369 708503), Argyll and Bute Council, Argyll House, Alexandra Parade, Dunoon, PA23 8AJ

Highland Council:

Children born between March 1, 2014 and February 29, 2016 are entitled to a funded Early Learning and Childcare place from August 21, 2018.

For Early Learning and Childcare places enrolment week will be Monday, February 12 to Friday, February 16, 2018. Please contact Highland Council on 01349 886606.



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It has been described as a 'little paradise' where every detail has been thought about to make sure every child has the best possible start in life. In our loving, caring environment, our children are listened to, respected and valued.

At 1st Steps we believe that the chance to learn is all around us and every child should grow in their own unique way exploring their own abilities without limitations and that is why our indoor and outdoor learning environments are specially designed to inspire.

In the established mature garden children can play, be active and grow their own plants, fruit and vegetables. Children are then able to prepare some of their own produce and taste it.

1st Steps Nursery is committed to providing nutritious healthy meals for children in a setting that allows them to share meal times together, including breakfast, lunch and tea daily.



Open 8am till 6pm, Monday - Friday
All bank & public holidays excluding xmas and new year

Children are cared for in their own age groups from 3 months to 5 years

If your child is born between the 1/3/15 and 29/02/16 they are eligible for free childcare sessions.

We offer AM and PM sessions for ELCC including wrap around and cooked lunch.

Please feel free to drop in and discuss your child's needs

OPEN DAYS:
Registration Week for ELCC 2018/19 will take place 5th March 9am to 3pm



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To find out more and take a look for yourself come to our OPEN DAY February 3rd (Fort William) from 10-2

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Stramash Outdoor Nursery

Stramash Social Enterprise delivers high quality learning opportunities through the outdoors across three nursery sites and an adventurous schools programme. Based in Oban, Fort William and Elgin we work closely with children, parents, staff and communities to provide experiences for children and young people that inspire creativity, development and stewardship of the natural world. With Ben Nevis and Inverloch Castle as its backdrop our Fort William nursery is an ever changing and engaging space. Our Oban nursery is located on a clifftop at Ganavan with stunning views over to Lismore and Mull. Specially designed to promote, intrigue and wonder whilst providing warmth and shelter when it's needed. Our staff are qualified, motivated, and friendly and are passionate about children's rights and interests. They support children to make their own decisions and discoveries, follow their passions in a nurturing environment while ensuring that they are prepared to thrive in our world outdoors. With Stramash you can make your family part of something amazing.



For more information please call 01631 566 080 or email info@stramash.org.uk.



Both teams observe a minute's silence before Saturday's game in memory of former Oban Lorne captain Euan Wilson who died recently. Photographs: Stephen Lawson.

Two late tries see Lorne go down to Annan

Oban Lorne 15
Annan 26
BT West Division One

OBAN Lorne welcomed mid-table Annan RFC to Glencruitten on Saturday for the first meeting of the sides this season.

A minute's silence was observed prior to Saturday's fixture in memory of former Oban Lorne captain Euan Wilson who tragically passed away in New Zealand at the turn of the year. Euan was a popular figure at the club, captaining the team in the

2007/2008 season. The thoughts of everyone at Oban Lorne are with Euan's wife Stefani and the rest of their family.

Oban Lorne RFC will be involved in any memorial events in memory of Euan and will inform members of any such events.



Craig Wright side-steps this Annan defender.

Coach Corrie Louw made a few changes from last week's promising performance at league leaders Allan Glens with props Andrew Johnston and Daniel Kemp coming into the starting XV.

There was also a return for second row Jack Strachan, while Oban High School teacher Matt Walker made his debut in the back row.

The only change to the backline was the return of experienced full back David McLaughlin.

It was a scrappy start to the game with both teams trying too hard at times to test the opposition defence. Knock-on after knock-on in the opening exchanges resulting from the damp conditions contributed to a stop, start first few minutes.

Oban were dealt an early blow after five minutes with the



Stephen Povey powers his way through the Annan defence.



Callum MacLachlan barges his way over the line to score Oban's second try.

sin-binning of back row Matt Walker. Walker's dismissal could be at best described as 'soft' with the referee deeming a perfectly executed tackle too dangerous resulting in Oban playing with 14 men for 10 minutes.

Walker's absence in the Oban defence almost definitely resulted in Annan's first try of the game as their impressive inside centre Callaghan made a good break from the 22 to touch down over the line. 5-0 to Annan after 10 minutes.

The home side responded well from the early set backs and were rewarded with a second try in two games from Radostin Maksimov. Oban's hooker finished well to put Oban 7-5 ahead. The conversion was well taken by Finlay Carmichael.

Oban were full of confidence at this stage and their dominance showed with another try, this time from powerful winger Callum MacLachlan who finished from close range. 12-5 to Oban.

The score remained the same at half time.

Both sides were lucky to keep 15 men on the pitch after some sloppy tackles.

An increasingly nervous performance from the referee prevented any further yellow cards being given.

Annan had the better start of the second half with their impressive backline moving the ball well. The away side responded with a try from Copeland on 50 minutes to tie the score at 12-12.

Oban hit back shortly after with a Carmichael penalty to regain a 15-12 lead.

Annan continued to attack well and sustained a long period of pressure on the Oban tryline. The men in green stood firm though and cleared their lines.

With around 20 minutes remaining, Oban found themselves in some great field positions to put Annan under



Radi Maksimov scores Oban's first try.

pressure. Attack after attack was launched at the tryline to no reward as Annan turned the ball over on a couple of occasions and kicked clear.

Going into the closing stages, Oban were awarded a penalty within scoring distance after a horrendous challenge on hooker Maksimov. After a period of 'handbags' between the players the referee forgot his prior decision and awarded Annan a scrum - much to the frustration of the Oban players and crowd.

After missing the chance of potentially going 18-12 in front, Oban were now on the backfoot with Annan gaining most of the possession in the home side's half.

After a long period of pressure, Annan scored their third try of the day with Alex Halliday crossing with five minutes remaining. 12-17 to the visitors.

Oban failed to hit back in the last five minutes and were dealt another blow when Richard MacKay was sin binned for an off-the-ball offence.

Rugby

Despite MacKay being punched in the face by a member of the opposition, the referee deemed MacKay had acted in an inappropriate manner and would spend the remainder of the game on the sidelines.

Annan attacked again, with Halliday scoring with the last play of the game. Full time 24-15 to Annan.

This was definitely a missed opportunity for Oban Lorne who only have themselves to blame for letting the visitors back into the game so late on, despite some of the controversial calls that went against them.

Despite the loss, there are positive signs the men in green are moving in the right direction.

Oban turn their attention to this Saturday's game away to fellow strugglers Irvine RFC.

This is a must win for both sides who are hoping to pull themselves away from the foot of the table.

Saints' senior team up for the cups

Football

THE WINNERS of the Oban Saints v East Kilbride Rolls Royce game have been given a tough away draw to Ayrshire Premier League outfit Kilbride Thistle from Saltcoats in the sixth round of the Scottish Cup. The tie is due to be played on Saturday February 3.

The Oban side have been drawn at home to Caledonian League team Woodhall Thistle from Holytown in the fifth round of the West of Scotland Cup. This game is scheduled for Saturday January 27 at Glencruitten.

Argyll rivals Lochgilphead Red Star are the opponents in the second round of the Jimmy Marshall Trophy. This game will be played at Oban's community pitch at the end of January.

Scottish Amateur FL results and fixtures

LAST Saturday's results: Scottish Amateur Cup fifth round - East Kilbride Rolls Royce v Oban Saints, postponed; Premier Division One - Campbeltown Pupils 0, Neilston 3; Premier Division Two - FC Argyle 7, Tarbert 1; Lochgilphead Red Star 1, Port Glasgow OBU 1.

This Saturday's fixtures: Scottish Amateur Cup fifth round - East Kilbride Rolls Royce v Oban Saints; Premier Division One - Port Glasgow v Campbeltown Pupils; Premier Division Two - Castlemilk v Lochgilphead Red Star; Tarbert v Duncanrig.

Saints' youth team results and fixtures

LAST weekend's results: Under 13s 4, Broomhill 2. Kyle Cooper (2), Ruairidh Buchanan and Cooper MacIntyre were Saints' goalscorers. Under 14s, no game; Under 15s 12, Busby 0. Scoring for Saints were Connor Moore (5), Toby MacFarlane Barrow (2), Ryan Barclay (2), James Beaton (2) and Kieron Lopez. Drumchapel United 1, Under 16s 1. On target for Saints was Euan Finlay. Campbeltown Pupils 1, Under 17s 9. Saints goalscorers were Cammy Kerr (4), Keir MacLean (2), Kenneth Black, Rory Dowd and Nathan Allan.

This weekend's fixtures: Scottish Cup - Lasswade v Under 13s; League - Under 14s v Dumbarton Riverside; Under 15s v no game; Regional Cup - Under 16s v North Kelvin; Regional Cup - Under 17s v Syngenta.

No game for ladies

OBAN Lorne Ladies had no game on Sunday as Ardrossan failed to raise a team for the National 2 fixture.

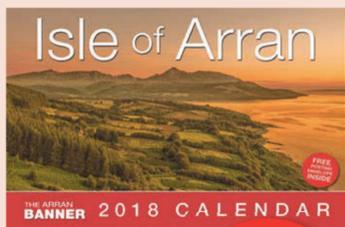
The Green Army are back in action this Sunday as they travel to face their nearest challengers Grangemouth RFC.

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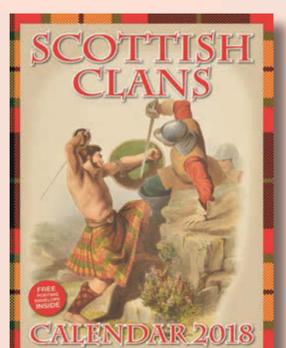
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Boxing coach Charlie Anderson, left, receives the donation from Kyle's mother Andrea, right, as father Kevin and brother Lee look on. Photograph: Iain Ferguson, the Write Image.

Kyle's family donate to Lochaber Phoenix Club

Boxing

THE FAMILY of 17-year-old Kyle Bruce, who died in a car crash last November, has donated £700 to Lochaber Phoenix Boxing Club.

The money was raised at a collection at Kyle's funeral.

The funeral ceremony was held in the boxing ring at the Nevis Centre as it was Kyle's wish to get into the boxing ring with his boxer brother Lee, who is a member of Lochaber Phoenix Boxing Club.

Kyle's parents Andrea and Kevin and his brother Lee presented the cheque to coach Charlie Anderson.

Lochaber club lotteries

Lottery numbers

THIS week's Fort William Golf Club lotto numbers were 6, 9 and 14.

There was no winner so the jackpot for the draw today (Thursday January 18) will be £900.

Numbers drawn in the Caol Regeneration lotto were 3, 7 and 20.

There were no winning tickets so next week's jackpot will be £1,300.

Caol Community Centre's bingo lotto numbers for this week were 5, 7 and 9. There were no winners so next week's jackpot will be £500.

Balachulish Shinty Club's lottery numbers for this week were 3, 11 and 13.

One lucky winner, Duncan Wallace of Fallin, Stirling, won the £400 jackpot.

Next week's draw will have a prize of £200.

Spean Bridge Golf Club awards and annual meeting

Golf

SPEAN Bridge Golf Club will host its annual awards and annual general meeting on Saturday January 27.

There will be golfing action with a Texas scramble or stableford competition starting at 11am.

Refreshments will be served in the clubhouse between 2pm and 3pm with the AGM and awards starting at 3pm.

National recognition for Fort William judo coach

CLOCKING up more than 650 miles in her car every week to coach judo, Rebecca Maclean's commitment to the sport has earned her a nomination for a national award.

The 26-year-old from Fort William travels to Glasgow three days a week to coach in Springburn, Whiteinch and the east end of the city as part of the Judo Girls Rock programme and says it is her love of the sport that makes her arduous commutes worthwhile.

Her incredible dedication to the sport and the girls she coaches means she has been named as a finalist in the Young Coach of the Year category at the sportsScotland Year of Young People Awards 2018.

The awards showcase how sport can be used for positive social change and to celebrate the incredible dedication of the young people who give selflessly to sport in their local communities.

The five hours of travel time and near 14-hour days Rebecca puts in for each coaching day, as well as her professional preparation and delivery of each session, is the perfect example of that.

Bond

And the modest coach insists she doesn't think twice about continuing to make the long journeys from home, saying the bond she has built with the girls she coaches and her passion for the Judo Girls Rock programme would be too much of a wrench to break.

Judo

She said: 'I love Judo Girls Rock and I've noticed a big difference in myself since I started it. The sessions are being delivered in areas of deprivation and the programme is so good for the girls. I've seen such a massive difference in all of them.'

'I absolutely love it, that's why I keep doing it. I've grown such a bond with the girls and the sport.'

Satisfying

'To see the difference in the girls while I've been working with them is so satisfying. That is the key to it.'

'To see other girls enjoying judo like I did when I was younger is brilliant. I've gained so much experience out of the programme as well. I think the programme will continue to grow.'

'We have girls who are talking about doing competitions and I did a session where all the mums and the sisters of the girls took part. Now we have mums talking about trying judo with their daughters.'

Rebecca was a skilled judoka herself and competed for Scotland up until the age of 20. But having moved to Edinburgh to compete, she became homesick and niggling injuries led her to return to Fort William.

After taking the decision to compete less and keen to remain involved in judo in some capacity, Rebecca started at Judo Girls Rock three years



Rebecca, far left, with a group of her students at a competition last year.

ago. Rebecca added: 'I started judo when I was 10. I left Fort William to live in Edinburgh to compete, then when I started competing less I got myself into coaching. I love the sport so I wanted to stay involved in it.'

'I got a bit homesick when I was living in Edinburgh and wanted to come home. I picked up a few injuries and missed my family. It was a culmination of

those things that helped me decide to move home.'

'When I started coaching, I didn't really have any youth work experience.'

'But in the last few months I've got a job as a youth development officer.'

'I applied for that position after delivering Judo Girls Rock and looking at the connection between sport and youth work.'

I always thought sport would be the career path I would take.'

Rebecca is in no doubt that her volunteering work has set her on the right path for a career in sport, with her new role in the community testament to that.

Rebecca will be attending the sportsScotland Year of Young People Awards 2018 on Friday January 26 at the Radisson Blu Hotel in Glasgow.

Fort flattened by nine-goal Forres

Fort William	1
Forres Mechanics	9
Highland League	

FORT William's hopes of their first points in the new year were emphatically dashed after a bruising defeat by an in-form Forres side.

Coming into this fixture, the visitors had been enjoying a five game winning streak and had no

intentions of letting that slide on Saturday.

The Fort, meanwhile, have struggled to compete in recent matches with one of their biggest challenges this season keeping their line-ups consistent and injury-free.

Rhythm

Forres didn't take long to settle back into the rhythm that has seen them climb up the league table in recent weeks, with Alan

Pollock coolly slotting home a penalty after five minutes.

Lee Fraser added the 'Can Cans' second of the match five minutes later before Robbie Duncanson got himself on the scoresheet just before the half hour mark.

Two goals in quick succession from Lee Fraser completed his hat-trick and sent the Fort in to the half-time break five goals down.

Football

Refreshed after the break, Fort William seemed to have steadied the ship and enjoyed a larger share of the action. Their hard work came to fruition when Kevin Ferguson, who recently re-signed for the club, hit the net on the 60th minute mark.

The Fort's celebrations were short lived, however, as Forres replied with two quick goals, from Graham Fraser and Ryan Stuart. A Lewis Campbell own goal added to the Fort defence's misery.

Lee Fraser's fourth goal of the game after 85 minutes rounded off Forres' scoring for the afternoon, meaning the home side narrowly avoided a third double-figure defeat of the season.

The win moves Forres up to fifth place in the Highland League, propelling them into contention for a top three finish to the season.

Fort William remain rooted to the bottom of the table with just a single point after failing to pick up a win so far this campaign.

The Fort continue their quest for points when they take on Deveronvale away from home this Saturday, January 20.



Fort goal scorer Kevin Ferguson evades the attention of Forres' Stuart Soane.

Photograph: Iain Ferguson, the Write Image.

Glasgow police exploit under-strength Lochaber

Police Scotland	26
Lochaber	10
BT West Division 3	

IN THEIR first game of the new year, Lochaber Rugby Club's trip to Glasgow to take on Police Scotland Glasgow on Saturday ended in defeat.

An under strength squad made the trip, with the team forced to start the match with a man short.

Police Scotland Glasgow capitalised on the numbers advantage out wide and scored their first try of the afternoon almost immediately.

Shrugging off the poor start to the game, Lochaber came back into the tie with some well worked moves in the backs, but it was the home side who scored again next.

There were lots of errors creeping into the game from both sides in the slippery Glasgow conditions.

Lochaber got their first try of the afternoon when Christopher Simpson received the ball on the right wing around 30 metres out after some quick hands. He still had a lot of work to do and broke free of three tackles on his way to the try line.

At the start of the second half, Lochaber again conceded

Rugby

early with PSG scoring almost straight from the kick off to extend their lead.

Lochaber then lost a player to injury with around 20 minutes left.

Despite being two men down Lochaber were next to score. With a maul being held up over the line Lochaber had the put in for a five metre scrum.

A couple of phases later, Simpson scored his second try after powering his way over from close range.

A Lochaber resurgence didn't quite materialise, however, and PSG exploited the numbers advantage and grabbed their fourth try of the game late on.

Despite the spirited performance from the visiting side in challenging circumstances, the final score ended 26-10 to Police Scotland Glasgow.

Lochaber scorers: Christopher Simpson, two tries.

The result means Lochaber remain in sixth place in the league, with Police Scotland Glasgow eight points behind in seventh.

This Saturday, Lochaber host Lanark at Banavie, with a 2pm kick-off.

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WEATHER

Thursday Sleet and snow
Winds moderate West North Westerly
Temperatures 1°C to 4°C.

Friday Sleet and snow showers
Winds light South Westerly
Temperatures 0°C to 4°C.

Weekend Sunny on Saturday
Heavy rain on Sunday
Winds moderate North Westerly
Temperatures -1°C to 5°C.

Stop Press: New pontoons at Ulva Ferry and visitor moorings installed at Lochaline by North West Marine Ltd

TIDAL INFORMATION
Tide tables for Oban during the week from Thursday January 18, 2018 are listed below with differences for major ports listed on the right. All times are GMT (add one hour BST)

Date		am		pm	
Thur	00.34	1.1	06.32	4.0	12.52
Fri	01.08	1.1	07.06	4.0	13.27
Sat	01.38	1.2	07.38	3.9	14.00
Sun	02.06	1.2	08.09	3.8	14.30
Mon	02.34	1.3	08.41	3.7	15.02
Tues	03.09	1.4	09.19	3.6	15.43
Wed	03.54	1.5	10.07	3.4	16.38

Tidal Constants: (Add or deduct from High Water at Oban)

Ardrihaig	-5.35	Mallaig	+0.25
Campbeltown	-5.30	Portree	+0.55
Crinan	-0.47	Tobermory	+0.16
Islay Port Ellen	2.00	Dover	+5.30
Lochboisdale	+0.30		

Ferry Crossings/Sea States

Oban to Barra/South Uist	Moderate
Oban to Coll/Tiree	Moderate
Kennacraig to Islay	Moderate